Arms and the Man

Come Back Little Sheba

Anna Christie

The Wild Duck

The Glass Menagerie

Juno and the Paycock

The Cherry Orchard

The Skin of Our Teeth

The Playboy of

the Western World

MODERN DRAMA FOR ANALYSIS

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MODERN DRAMA FOR ANALYSIS

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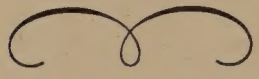

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MODERN DRAMA FOR ANALYSIS

REVISED EDITION

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TO THE INSTRUCTOR

BECAUSE PLAYS are written to be performed in the theater, their full dimensions cannot be appreciated through reading alone. Yet reading and studying drama can be a satisfying and rewarding experience if dramatic literature is not viewed simply as a story, or read as one would read a novel. The purpose of this text is to provide an approach to the reading of modern drama which demands rigorous textual analysis.

I believe that the student should first become acquainted with the drama of his own time so that when he attends the theater he will better understand the significance and value of the complex workings of the spectacle before him. I have, consequently, limited this collection to relatively modern plays. If Greek, Elizabethan, or Restoration drama were included, for example, an understanding of the quite different theatrical conventions, styles of acting, and physical characteristics of their respective theaters would be necessary.

Most drama collections of this size are based on principles different from those followed here. One possible basis of selection is dramatic type; another is geographical representation; still another is the exemplification of major modern theatrical developments; and a more recent trend demands plays that mirror cultural changes. Excellent as these approaches may be for specialized study, I have found that collections made on such bases teach the student little about either the play-going or the play-reading experience.

Although I have given consideration to variety of nationality and of dramatic types by including plays which illustrate most of the important trends of the last seventy years, my primary concern has been to select readable plays of intrinsic merit which admirably demonstrate the techniques of the playwright and the resources of the modern theater. I have avoided theatrical novelty for its own sake, for only the best plays make the most successful use of the assets of the stage.

In this book the plays are arranged in a sequence designed to further the study of the dramatic techniques they employ. Hence the

first play, *Arms and the Man,* not only is a relatively simple one to analyze but also introduces the student to a wide range of dramatic devices of which he may not have been previously aware. The following plays deal in more detail, and on increasingly difficult levels with one or more theatrical effects. Each play is preceded by a brief biographical sketch of the dramatist, a list of his important works, a short bibliography, notes or a glossary when necessary, ground plans for each set, and an illustration of an actual performance. An analysis of some particular aspects of the drama and a set of questions raising problems not discussed in the critical apparatus follow each play except *Arms and the Man,* for which there is a more detailed study after each act. There is also included a brief introduction on how to read drama, a general bibliography, and a glossary.

The analyses are, of course, far from exhaustive, but they attempt to focus attention on the important dramatic problems that arise in the plays. It is not intended that the critical material will do the instructor's work by discussing in detail a wide range of dramatic issues, or the student's work by substituting for a thorough and concentrated reading of the plays. Many major problems are not raised at all; consideration of others is deliberately cut short before they have been explored in detail. The purpose of the commentary is to point the way into the plays, to sharpen the student's critical responses, and to raise topics which can be fully discussed in class. It is hoped that the explications will provide ample scope for disagreement. When possible, an author's own comments on his play have been included, and for two plays excerpts from the comments of professional critics, chosen for their contradictory points of view, have been incorporated into the critical material. An effort has been made to keep technical and critical terminology to a minimum.

If the commentary can help an instructor wage war against time, the nemesis of every class hour, it will have served a purpose. By turning the student's attention to making his own study of the crucial issues in the play, the analyses are designed to free class time for a more exciting and intensive investigation of the rich complexity of dramatic literature. A keen classroom frustration for me is that students often need to have so much time spent on the most fundamental critical questions that the limited classroom time is exhausted in preliminaries, to the inevitable impoverishment of the student's view of the play. The apparatus should enable the instructor to move more readily to the consideration of a wide diversity of problems beyond those of primary meaning and technique,

or perhaps to free time for the reading of more plays than would otherwise be possible.

The questions appended to each play go beyond the mere testing of a student's thoroughness in preparation. It is intended that they should help the student to find a deeper unity in this anthology through his own exploration of the recurrent themes, attitudes, and dramatic techniques that run through all the plays. Not only should the questions provide good, continual review, but they should also enlarge the student's knowledge beyond the limits of the individual play and start him thinking about the larger problems that are universal in modern dramatic literature and are not confined by the boundaries of nationalities, periods, or dramatic types.

I wish to acknowledge my gratitude to my friends and colleagues Erie T. Volkert and James VanWart, who have always willingly helped me with suggestions and advice, and to Ronald V. Glens, who drew the preliminary sketches of the ground plans. But most of all there is the ever-increasing debt to my wife, Beth, indefatigable typist, patient listener, perceptive critic, and perennial morale-booster.

P.M.C.

TO THE STUDENT

THIS IS A BOOK on how to read drama. The assumption upon which it is based may at first seem both insulting and fallacious: anyone who has been educated knows how to read, and furthermore, one should see drama, not read it. This book, however, has been prepared in the belief that most people do not know how to read except in a superficial way, and that, although the experience of reading drama is quite different from that of seeing a theatrical production and cannot be substituted for it, reading a play as dramatic literature can be both entertaining and intellectually stimulating.

In the theater much of the hard work of interpreting a play is done for an audience by the actors, the director, the designer, the electricians, the stagehands, the wardrobe mistress, and all the others who are involved in staging a full-scale performance. A piece of written literature is transformed into something physically and vitally alive through the complex resources of the modern theater. Communication of character, meaning, and mood is established not only by dialogue, but by movement and gesture or even by complete silence. Costumes and make-up play a significant role, as do sets, lighting, properties, and sound and musical effects.

Reading drama presents a far greater challenge than seeing a play for the very reason that the reader must imaginatively create his own theatrical production. In reading, of course, one can only approximate the staging of a play; but if something is lost, something more is gained, for there are depths and dimensions to dramatic art which are largely lost on the stage. The opportunity to make a deliberate and thoughtful evaluation of a play is not permitted an audience in the theater. A line lost in laughter, a subtle gesture or verbal implication missed, cannot be retrieved. In watching a play we do not begin to exhaust its artistic potential; in reading a play, on the other hand, we shift the area of inspection, to some extent, from the technical and theatrical to the literary. The thematic, tonal, structural, and symbolic elements of drama can receive increased attention, even though the importance of plot, ac-

tion, scene, character, and dialogue should not be overlooked for a moment. But simply to reduce drama to a story in dialogue is to deprive it of most of its literary significance.

Story, however, is where one begins. Thus, it is essential first to read a play quickly for the sheer enjoyment of discovering the outcome. If possible, one should read a play through at a single sitting, recreating as far as possible the actual experience of an evening in the theater and responding to the pace of the drama, the different tones of voice, and the variety of speech rhythms. The thoughtful, detailed analysis which must then follow ought not to be a painful bore. Deeper understanding should enhance one's enjoyment of dramatic literature by developing the reader into a more sensitive, discriminating, and imaginative person.

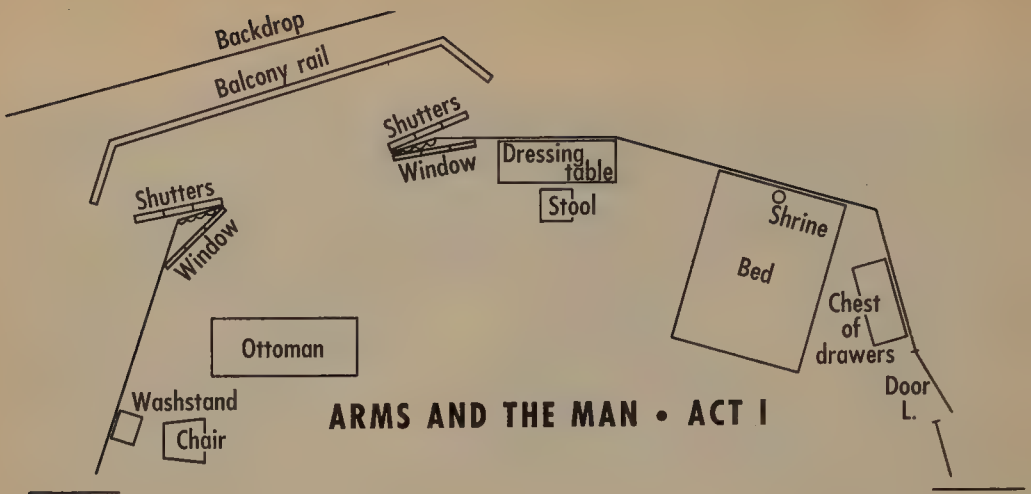
Drama, like all modes of art, imposes structure and form on experience, allowing us to see our lives in more meaningful terms than the chaos of everyday existence permits. The aim of this book is to explore these patterns of meaning and to develop an awareness of the artistic processes and techniques by which the playwright transforms experience into dramatic art. The way to obtain this insight is not by reading dramatic criticism or, worse, critics' criticisms of the criticism, but by turning to the plays themselves. Long, involved introductions dealing with drama and literary history and extended definitions of critical terminology often get badly in the way of the play, and have therefore been omitted. The most valuable part of this anthology is, of course, the nine plays. The additional material, at most, will help to intensify and increase understanding and enjoyment. The criticism can be ignored; the plays cannot. The analyses following the plays are not intended to be *the* reading of the play, but only *a* reading, and an incomplete one at that. It is hoped, of course, that the commentaries will prove to be useful and meaningful elucidations and that the questions will stimulate further thinking about these plays in particular and drama in general; but the primary purpose of the critical apparatus is to focus attention upon the plays as dramatic works of art and thus gradually to cultivate and enhance the reader's critical ability so that it will be a permanent part of his equipment long after he has left the classroom.

P. M. C.

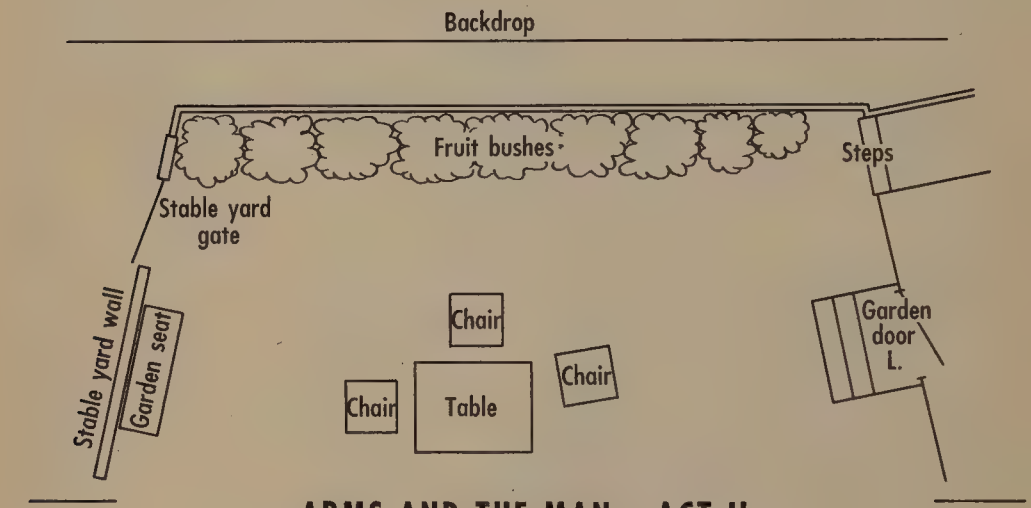
MODERN DRAMA FOR ANALYSIS

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

ARMS AND THE MAN



ARMS AND THE MAN • ACT I



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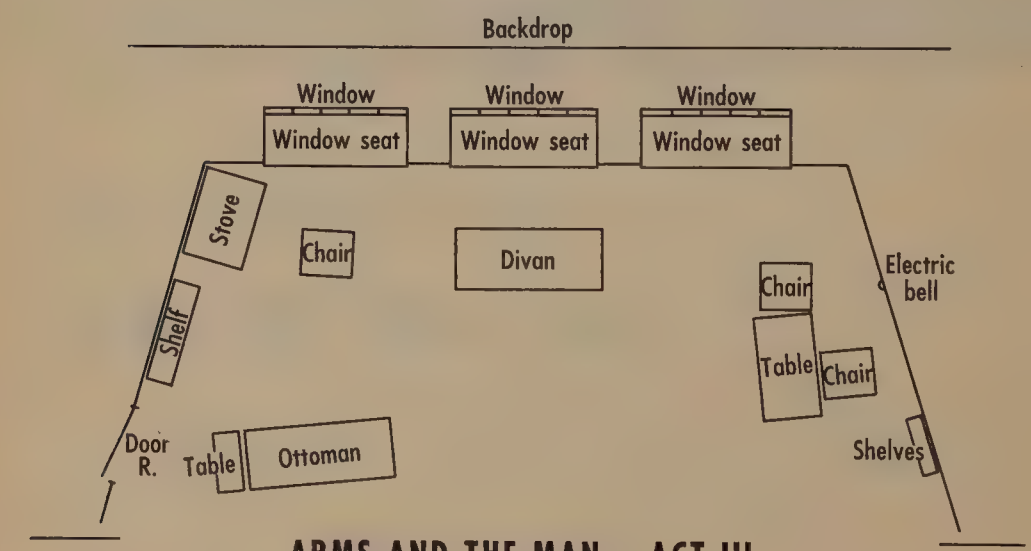

ARMS AND THE MAN • ACT III

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW (1856-1950) belongs to a distinguished line of Irish writers of English comedy – Congreve, Goldsmith, Sheridan, Wilde. He was born in Dublin, the "upstart son of a downstart," as he put it. His family claimed descent from Macduff; "it was as good as being descended from Shakespeare," says Shaw. But his father was a poor and unsuccessful member of a Protestant family that was once a part of the landed gentry of Ireland; the elder Shaw was an alcoholic whose only bequest to his son was a delightfully rich sense of humor and a hearty, mocking skepticism. From his mother, a remarkable woman and a gifted singer, Shaw inherited his interest in music.

Shaw's early career hardly gave promise that he would become one of the great writers of comedy in English. Up to the age of forty he seems to have tried everything but playwriting. As one commentator characterizes his kaleidoscopic career:

> We may describe Shaw as a socialist and propagandist for the socialist cause; a journalist-critic of music, fine arts, and drama; a novelist, a dramatist, and a director of plays; an astute manager of his own financial interests; an enormously successful lecturer; a reformer concerned with social problems (such as housing, women's rights, prison reform, and prostitution); a propounder of scientific theories and a critic of science, a philosopher, a preacher of a peculiar evolutionary religion and of socialist Christianity; an anti-vivisectionist, a vegetarian, and an advocate of spelling reform (the cause for which he left the bulk of his estate).[1]

After joining his mother in London when he was twenty, he did an assortment of odd jobs and wrote five novels, about which the kindest thing that could be said is that they are unsuccessful. His last novel, and the only one published, *An Unsocial Socialist,* was probably the first Marxist novel in English literature. In 1884 Shaw became an eloquent partisan of the newly organized Fabian Society, which broke from the revolutionary Marxian theories of

[1] Reuben A. Brower, "George Bernard Shaw," *Major British Writers* (New York, 1954), II, 521.

economics and of political violence and advocated instead a process of social evolution; from these roots grew England's Labour Party.

At twenty-nine, Shaw became a music critic in London, startling the Victorians with the brash, impudent, and witty criticisms which continued to be a Shavian trademark when he became a drama critic in 1895. His first play, *Widowers' Houses* (1892), attacking landlords in slum areas, was as unsuccessful as his novels had been. Not until *Arms and the Man* (1894) did Shaw achieve an artistic blend of comedy with a philosophical and social purpose. Even then his popularity as a dramatist was by no means established; for example, *Candida* (1894) had to wait a decade before it became an international box-office triumph. In the meantime Shaw had married Charlotte Payne-Townsend, like himself a person of liberal views, whom he had met while a member of the Fabians.

For nearly half a century more Shaw continued to write plays, critical essays in the form of long prefaces to his plays, and political and social tracts, building his reputation as the greatest dramatic genius in English letters since the eighteenth century. In 1950, at the age of ninety-four, his extraordinary career at last came to an end.

To understand Shaw's historical contribution to the modern theater one must be aware that in 1879 Matthew Arnold, one of Victorian England's greatest critic-poets, could write: "In England we have no modern drama at all." Not only was England — and America too — without distinguished dramatists, but the theater itself was in disrepute as a mode of artistic expression. The Victorian middle class had inherited from their Puritan ancestors the firmly held belief that the theater was an instrument of the devil. No really respectable lady would ever have considered a theatrical career. And the plays that were produced were largely dramatic claptrap — romantic and sentimental melodrama. Shaw's historical achievement lies in his returning along with Oscar Wilde, his most famous contemporary in the English theater, to an older tradition of English drama — the comedy of manners which flourished in the Restoration and the eighteenth century. Shaw was also inspired by eighteenth-century comic opera, particularly those operas in the style of Mozart. Like his dramatic and operatic predecessors, Shaw placed great emphasis upon characters who have their genesis in simplified and traditional comic types and upon sparkling, witty dialogue which often sounds more like the counterpointing of the rhythms and tones of individualized operatic voices than the utterance of full-bodied characters. It is little wonder that *Arms and the*

Man should perhaps be even better known in its musical reincarnation, Oscar Straus' *The Chocolate Soldier.*

But Shaw was not content with writing a comedy of manners in *Arms and the Man* or in many of his later plays. Deeply influenced by his Norwegian contemporary Henrik Ibsen, whom we shall study later, Shaw demanded that the English theater become a vehicle for the realistic dramatic presentation of serious moral and social ideas. The conclusion of his preface to *Arms and the Man* underscores this thematic purpose and offers the reader a good approach to the play:

> I am quite aware that the much criticized Swiss officer in *Arms and the Man* is not a conventional stage soldier. He suffers from want of food and sleep; his nerves go to pieces after three days under fire, ending in the horrors of a rout and pursuit; he has found by experience that it is more important to have a few bits of chocolate to eat in the field than cartridges for his revolver. When many of my critics rejected these circumstances as fantastically improbable and cynically unnatural, it was not necessary to argue them into common sense: all I had to do was to brain them, so to speak, with the first half dozen military authorities at hand, beginning with the present Commander in Chief. But when it proved that such unromantic (but all the more dramatic) facts implied to them a denial of the existence of courage, patriotism, faith, hope, and charity, I saw that it was not really mere matter of fact that was at issue between us . . . . The real issue . . . was whether the political and religious idealism which had inspired Gladstone to call for the rescue of these Balkan principalities from the despotism of the Turk, and converted miserably enslaved provinces into hopeful and gallant little States, will survive the general onslaught on idealism which is implicit, and indeed explicit, in *Arms and the Man* and the naturalist plays of the modern school. For my part I hope not; for idealism, which is only a flattering name for romance in politics and morals, is as obnoxious to me as romance in ethics or religion. In spite of a Liberal Revolution or two, I can no longer be satisfied with fictitious morals and fictitious good conduct, shedding fictitious glory on robbery, starvation, disease, crime, drink, war, cruelty, cupidity, and all the other commonplaces of civilization which drive men to the theatre to make foolish pretences that such things are progress, science, morals, religion, patriotism, imperial supremacy, national greatness and all the other names the newspapers call them. On the other hand, I see plenty of good in the world working itself out as fast as the idealists will allow it; and if they would only let it alone and learn to respect reality, which would include the beneficial exercise of respecting themselves, and incidentally respecting me, we should all get along much better and faster. At all events, I do not see moral chaos and anarchy as the alternative to romantic convention; and I am not going to pretend I do merely to please the people who are convinced that the world is held together only by the force of

unanimous, strenuous, eloquent, trumpet-tongued lying. To me the tragedy and comedy of life lie in the consequences, sometimes terrible, sometimes ludicrous, of our persistent attempts to found our institutions on the ideals suggested to our imaginations by our half-satisfied passions, instead of on a genuinely scientific natural history. And with that hint as to what I am driving at, I withdraw and ring up the curtain.

PRINCIPAL WORKS

Plays

Mrs. Warren's Profession (1893)
Arms and the Man (1894)
Candida (1894)
The Devil's Disciple (1897)
Caesar and Cleopatra (1898)
Captain Brassbound's Conversion (1899)
Man and Superman (1903)
Major Barbara (1905)
The Doctor's Dilemma (1906)
Misalliance (1910)
The Dark Lady of the Sonnets (1910)
Fanny's First Play (1911)
Androcles and the Lion (1912)
Pygmalion (1912)
Great Catherine (1913)
Heartbreak House (1916)
Back to Methuselah (1921)
Saint Joan (1923)
The Millionairess (1935)

Essays and Novels

An Unsocial Socialist (1883)
Fabian Essays in Socialism (1889)
The Quintessence of Ibsenism (1891)
The Perfect Wagnerite (1898)
Dramatic Opinions and Essays (1906)
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CHARACTERS

CATHERINE PETKOFF, *a Bulgarian lady*
RAINA, *her daughter*
LOUKA, *the Petkoffs' maid*
BLUNTSCHLI, *a Swiss officer*
NICOLA, *the Petkoffs' butler*
PETKOFF, *a major in the Bulgarian Army*
SERGIUS, *Raina's fiancé, a captain in the Bulgarian Army*

Arms and the Man was first produced at the Avenue Theatre, London, on April 21, 1894.

Act One

NIGHT: *A lady's bedchamber in Bulgaria, in a small town near the Dragoman Pass, late in November in the year 1885. Through an open window with a little balcony a peak of the Balkans, wonderfully white and beautiful in the starlit snow, seems quite close at hand, though it is really miles away. The interior of the room is not like anything to be seen in the west of Europe. It is half rich Bulgarian, half cheap Viennese. Above the head of the bed, which stands against a little wall cutting off the left hand corner of the room, is a painted wooden shrine, blue and gold, with an ivory image of Christ, and a light hanging before it in a pierced metal ball suspended by three chains. The principal seat, placed towards the other side of the room and opposite the window, is a Turkish ottoman. The counterpane and hangings of the bed, the window curtains, the little carpet, and all the ornamental textile fabrics in the room are oriental and gorgeous; the paper on the walls is occidental and paltry. The washstand, against the wall on the side nearest the ottoman and window, consists of an enamelled iron basin with a pail beneath it in a painted metal frame, and a single towel on the rail at the side. The dressing table, between the bed and the window, is a common pine table, covered with a cloth of many colours, with an expensive toilet mirror on it. The door is on the side nearest the bed; and there is a chest of drawers between. This chest of drawers is also covered by a variegated native cloth; and on it there is a pile of paper backed novels, a box of chocolate creams, and a miniature easel with a large photograph of an extremely handsome officer, whose lofty bearing and magnetic glance can be felt even from the portrait. The room is lighted by a candle on the chest of drawers, and another on the dressing table with a box of matches beside it.*

The window is hinged doorwise and stands wide open. Outside, a pair of wooden shutters, opening outwards, also stand open. On the balcony a young lady, intensely conscious of the romantic beauty of the night, and of the fact that her own youth and beauty are part of it, is gazing at the snowy Balkans. She is in her night-

gown, well covered by a long mantle of furs, worth, on a moderate estimate, about three times the furniture of the room.

Her reverie is interrupted by her mother, CATHERINE PETKOFF, *a woman over forty, imperiously energetic, with magnificent black hair and eyes, who might be a very splendid specimen of the wife of a mountain farmer, but is determined to be a Viennese lady, and to that end wears a fashionable tea gown on all occasions.*

CATHERINE (*entering hastily, full of good news*): Raina! (*She pronounces it Rah-eena, with the stress on the ee*) Raina! (*She goes to the bed, expecting to find* RAINA *there*) Why, where—? (RAINA *looks into the room*) Heavens, child! are you out in the night air instead of in your bed? You'll catch your death. Louka told me you were asleep.

RAINA (*dreamily*): I sent her away. I wanted to be alone. The stars are so beautiful! What is the matter?

CATHERINE: Such news! There has been a battle.

RAINA (*her eyes dilating*): Ah! (*She comes eagerly to* CATHERINE.)

CATHERINE: A great battle at Slivnitza! A victory! And it was won by Sergius.

RAINA (*with a cry of delight*): Ah! (*They embrace rapturously*) Oh, mother! (*Then, with sudden anxiety*) Is father safe?

CATHERINE: Of course! He sends me the news. Sergius is the hero of the hour, the idol of the regiment.

RAINA: Tell me, tell me. How was it? (*Ecstatically*) Oh, mother! mother! mother! (*She pulls her mother down on the ottoman; and they kiss one another frantically.*)

CATHERINE (*with surging enthusiasm*): You can't guess how splendid it is. A cavalry charge! think of that! He defied our Russian commanders—acted without orders—led a charge on his own responsibility—headed it himself—was the first man to sweep through their guns. Can't you see it, Raina: our gallant splendid Bulgarians with their swords and eyes flashing, thundering down like an avalanche and scattering the wretched Serbs and their dandified Austrian officers like chaff. And you! you kept Sergius waiting a year before

you would be betrothed to him. Oh, if you have a drop of Bulgarian blood in your veins, you will worship him when he comes back.

RAINA: What will he care for my poor little worship after the acclamations of a whole army of heroes? But no matter; I am so happy! so proud! (*She rises and walks about excitedly*) It proves that all our ideas were real after all.

CATHERINE (*indignantly*): Our ideas real! What do you mean?

RAINA: Our ideas of what Sergius would do. Our patriotism. Our heroic ideals. I sometimes used to doubt whether they were anything but dreams. Oh, what faithless little creatures girls are! When I buckled on Sergius's sword he looked so noble; it was treason to think of disillusion or humiliation or failure. And yet—and yet—(*She sits down again suddenly*) Promise me you'll never tell him.

CATHERINE: Don't ask me for promises until I know what I'm promising.

RAINA: Well, it came into my head just as he was holding me in his arms and looking into my eyes, that perhaps we only had our heroic ideas because we are so fond of reading Byron and Pushkin, and because we were so delighted with the opera that season at Bucharest. Real life is so seldom like that! indeed never, as far as I knew it then. (*Remorsefully*) Only think, mother, I doubted him; I wondered whether all his heroic qualities and his soldiership might not prove mere imagination when he went into a real battle. I had an uneasy fear that he might cut a poor figure there beside all those clever officers from the Tsar's court.

CATHERINE: A poor figure! Shame on you! The Serbs have Austrian officers who are just as clever as the Russians; but we have beaten them in every battle for all that.

RAINA (*laughing and snuggling against her mother*): Yes: I was only a prosaic little coward. Oh, to think that it was all true! that Sergius is just as splendid and noble as he looks! that the world is really a glorious world for women who can see its glory and men who can act its romance! What happiness! what unspeakable fulfilment!

(*They are interrupted by the entry of* LOUKA, *a handsome proud girl in a pretty Bulgarian peasant's dress with double apron, so defiant*

that her servility to RAINA *is almost insolent. She is afraid of* CATHERINE, *but even with her goes as far as she dares.*)

LOUKA: If you please, madam, all the windows are to be closed and the shutters made fast. They say there may be shooting in the streets. (RAINA *and* CATHERINE *rise together, alarmed*) The Serbs are being chased right back through the pass; and they say they may run into the town. Our cavalry will be after them; and our people will be ready for them, you may be sure, now they're running away. (*She goes out on the balcony, and pulls the outside shutters to; then steps back into the room.*)

CATHERINE (*businesslike, housekeeping instincts aroused*): I must see that everything is made safe downstairs.

RAINA: I wish our people were not so cruel. What glory is there in killing wretched fugitives?

CATHERINE: Cruel! Do you suppose they would hesitate to kill you—or worse?

RAINA (*to* LOUKA): Leave the shutters so that I can just close them if I hear any noise.

CATHERINE (*authoritatively, turning on her way to the door*): Oh no, dear, you must keep them fastened. You would be sure to drop off to sleep and leave them open. Make them fast, Louka.

LOUKA: Yes, madam. (*She fastens them.*)

RAINA: Don't be anxious about me. The moment I hear a shot, I shall blow out the candles and roll myself up in bed with my ears well covered.

CATHERINE: Quite the wisest thing you can do, my love. Good night.

RAINA: Good night. (*Her emotion comes back for a moment*) Wish me joy. (*They kiss*) This is the happiest night of my life—if only there are no fugitives.

CATHERINE: Go to bed, dear; and don't think of them. (*She goes out.*)

LOUKA (*secretly to* RAINA): If you would like the shutters open, just give them a push like this. (*She pushes them; they open; she pulls them to again*) One of them ought to be bolted at the bottom; but the bolt's gone.

RAINA (*with dignity, reproving her*): Thanks, Louka; but we must do what we are told. (LOUKA *makes a grimace*) Good night.

LOUKA (*carelessly*): Good night. (*She goes out, swaggering.*)

(RAINA, *left alone, takes off her fur cloak and throws it on the ottoman. Then she goes to the chest of drawers, and adores the portrait there with feelings that are beyond all expression. She does not kiss it or press it to her breast, or show it any mark of bodily affection; but she takes it in her hands and elevates it, like a priestess.*)

RAINA (*looking up at the picture*): Oh, I shall never be unworthy of you any more, my soul's hero: never, never, never. (*She replaces it reverently. Then she selects a novel from the little pile of books. She turns over the leaves dreamily; finds her page; turn the book inside out at it; and, with a happy sigh, gets into bed and prepares to read herself to sleep. But before abandoning herself to fiction, she raises her eyes once more, thinking of the blessed reality, and murmurs*) My hero! my hero!

(*A distant shot breaks the quiet of the night. She starts, listening; and two more shots, much nearer, follow, startling her so that she scrambles out of bed, and hastily blows out the candle on the chest of drawers. Then, putting her fingers in her ears, she runs to the dressing table, blows out the light there, and hurries back to bed in the dark, nothing being visible but the glimmer of the light in the pierced ball before the image, and the starlight seen through the slits at the top of the shutters. The firing breaks out again: there is a startling fusillade quite close at hand. Whilst it is still echoing, the shutters disappear, pulled open from without; and for an instant the rectangle of snowy starlight flashes out with the figure of a man silhouetted in black upon it. The shutters close immediately; and the room is dark again. But the silence is now broken by the sound of panting. Then there is a scratch; and the flame of a match is seen in the middle of the room.*)

RAINA (*crouching on the bed*): Who's there? (*The match is out instantly*) Who's there? Who is that?

A MAN'S VOICE (*in the darkness, subduedly, but threateningly*): Sh—sh! Don't call out; or you'll be shot. Be good; and no harm will happen to you. (*She is heard leaving her bed, and making for the door*) Take care; it's no use trying to run away.

RAINA: But who—

THE VOICE (*warning*): Remember: if you raise your voice my revolver will go off. (*Commandingly*) Strike a light and let me see you. Do you hear? (*Another moment of silence and darkness as she retreats to the chest of drawers. Then she lights a candle; and the mystery is at an end. He is a man of about 35, in a deplorable plight, bespattered with mud and blood and snow, his belt and the strap of his revolver case keeping together the torn ruins of the blue tunic of a Serbian artillery officer. All that the candlelight and his unwashed unkempt condition make it possible to discern is that he is of middling stature and undistinguished appearance, with strong neck and shoulders, roundish obstinate looking head covered with short crisp bronze curls, clear quick eyes and good brows and mouth, hopelessly prosaic nose like that of a strong minded baby, trim soldierlike carriage and energetic manner, and with all his wits about him in spite of his desperate predicament: even with a sense of the humor of it, without, however, the least intention of trifling with it or throwing away a chance. Reckoning up what he can guess about* RAINA: *her age, her social position, her character, and the extent to which she is frightened, he continues, more politely but still most determinedly*) Excuse my disturbing you; but you recognize my uniform? Serb! If I'm caught I shall be killed. (*Menacingly*) Do you understand that?

RAINA: Yes.

THE MAN: Well, I don't intend to get killed if I can help it. (*Still more formidably*) Do you understand that? (*He locks the door quickly but quietly.*)

RAINA (*disdainfully*): I suppose not. (*She draws herself up superbly, and looks him straight in the face, adding, with cutting emphasis*) Some soldiers, I know, are afraid to die.

THE MAN (*with grim goodhumor*): All of them, dear lady, all of them, believe me. It is our duty to live as long as we can. Now, if you raise an alarm—

RAINA (*cutting him short*): You will shoot me. How do you know that *I* am afraid to die?

THE MAN (*cunningly*): Ah; but suppose I don't shoot you, what will happen then? A lot of your cavalry will burst into this pretty room of yours and slaughter me here like a pig, for I'll fight like a demon; they shan't get me into the street to amuse themselves with. I know what they are. Are you prepared to receive that sort of company in your present undress? (RAINA, *suddenly conscious of her nightgown, instinctively shrinks and gathers it more closely about her neck. He watches her and adds pitilessly*) Hardly presentable, eh? (*She turns to the ottoman. He raises his pistol instantly, and cries*) Stop! (*She stops*) Where are you going?

RAINA (*with dignified patience*): Only to get my cloak.

THE MAN (*passing swiftly to the ottoman and snatching the cloak*): A good idea! I'll keep the cloak; and you'll take care that nobody comes in and sees you without it. This is a better weapon than the revolver, eh? (*He throws the pistol down on the ottoman.*)

RAINA (*revolted*): It is not the weapon of a gentleman!

THE MAN: It's good enough for a man with only you to stand between him and death. (*As they look at one another for a moment,* RAINA *hardly able to believe that even a Serbian officer can be so cynically and selfishly unchivalrous, they are startled by a sharp fusillade in the street. The chill of imminent death hushes the man's voice as he adds*) Do you hear? If you are going to bring those blackguards in on me you shall receive them as you are.

(*Clamor and disturbance. The pursuers in the street batter at the house door, shouting,* "Open the door! Open the door! Wake up, will you!" *A man servant's voice calls to them angrily from within,* "This is Major Petkoff's house: you can't come in here"; *but a renewal of the clamor, and a torrent of blows on the door, end with his letting a chain down with a clank, followed by a rush of heavy footsteps and a din of triumphant yells, dominated at last by the voice of* CATHERINE, *indignantly addressing an officer with,* "What does this mean, sir? Do you know where you are?" *The noise subsides suddenly.*)

LOUKA (*outside, knocking at the bedroom door*): My lady! my lady!

get up quick and open the door. If you don't they will break it down.

(*The fugitive throws up his head with the gesture of a man who sees that it is all over with him, and drops the manner he has been assuming to intimidate* RAINA.)

THE MAN (*sincerely and kindly*): No use, dear; I'm done for. (*Flinging the cloak to her*) Quick! wrap yourself up; they're coming.

RAINA: Oh, thank you. (*She wraps herself up with intense relief.*)

THE MAN (*between his teeth*): Don't mention it.

RAINA (*anxiously*): What will you do?

THE MAN (*grimly*): The first man in will find out. Keep out of the way; and don't look. It won't last long; but it will not be nice. (*He draws his sabre and faces the door, waiting.*)

RAINA (*impulsively*): I'll help you. I'll save you.

THE MAN: You can't.

RAINA: I can. I'll hide you. (*She drags him towards the window*) Here! behind the curtains.

THE MAN (*yielding to her*): There's just half a chance, if you keep your head.

RAINA (*drawing the curtain before him*): S-sh! (*She makes for the ottoman.*)

THE MAN (*putting out his head*): Remember—

RAINA (*running back to him*): Yes?

THE MAN: —nine soldiers out of ten are born fools.

RAINA: Oh! (*She draws the curtain angrily before him.*)

THE MAN (*looking out at the other side*): If they find me, I promise you a fight—a devil of a fight.

(*She stamps at him. He disappears hastily. She takes off her cloak, and throws it across the foot of the bed. Then, with a sleepy, disturbed air, she opens the door.* LOUKA *enters excitedly.*)

LOUKA: One of those beasts of Serbs has been seen climbing up the waterpipe to your balcony. Our men want to search for him; and they are so wild and drunk and furious. (*She makes for the other side of the room to get as far from the door as possible*) My lady says you are to dress at once and to—(*She sees the revolver lying on the ottoman and stops, petrified.*)

RAINA (*as if annoyed at being disturbed*): They shall not search here. Why have they been let in?

CATHERINE (*coming in hastily*): Raina, darling, are you safe? Have you seen anyone or heard anything?

RAINA: I heard the shooting. Surely the soldiers will not dare come in here?

CATHERINE: I have found a Russian officer, thank Heaven; he knows Sergius. (*Speaking through the door to someone outside*) Sir, will you come in now? My daughter will receive you.

(*A young Russian officer, in Bulgarian uniform, enters, sword in hand.*)

OFFICER (*with soft feline politeness and stiff military carriage*): Good evening, gracious lady. I am sorry to intrude; but there is a Serb hiding on the balcony. Will you and the gracious lady your mother please to withdraw whilst we search?

RAINA (*petulantly*): Nonsense, sir; you can see that there is no one on the balcony. (*She throws the shutters wide open and stands with her back to the curtain where the man is hidden, pointing to the moonlit balcony. A couple of shots are fired right under the window; and a bullet shatters the glass opposite* RAINA, *who winks and gasps, but stands her ground; whilst* CATHERINE *screams, and the officer, with a cry of* "Take care!" *rushes to the balcony.*)

THE OFFICER (*on the balcony, shouting savagely down to the street*): Cease firing there, you fools; do you hear? Cease firing, damn you! (*He glares down for a moment; then turns to* RAINA, *trying to re-*

sume his polite manner) Could anyone have got in without your knowledge? Were you asleep?

RAINA: No, I have not been to bed.

THE OFFICER (*impatiently, coming back into the room*): Your neighbors have their heads so full of runaway Serbs that they see them everywhere. (*Politely*) Gracious lady, a thousand pardons. Good night. (*Military bows, which* RAINA *returns coldly. Another to* CATHERINE, *who follows him out.*)

(RAINA *closes the shutters. She turns and sees* LOUKA, *who has been watching the scene curiously.*)

RAINA: Don't leave my mother, Louka, until the soldiers go away.

(LOUKA *glances at* RAINA, *at the ottoman, at the curtain; then purses her lips secretively, laughs insolently, and goes out.* RAINA, *highly offended by this demonstration, follows her to the door, and shuts it behind her with a slam, locking it violently. The man immediately steps out from behind the curtain, sheathing his sabre. Then, dismissing the danger from his mind in a businesslike way, he comes affably to* RAINA.)

THE MAN: A narrow shave; but a miss is as good as a mile. Dear young lady, your servant to the death. I wish for your sake I had joined the Bulgarian army instead of the other one. I am not a native Serb.

RAINA (*haughtily*): No, you are one of the Austrians who set the Serbs on to rob us of our national liberty, and who officer their army for them. We hate them!

THE MAN: Austrian! not I. Don't hate me, dear young lady. I am a Swiss, fighting merely as a professional soldier. I joined the Serbs because they came first on the road from Switzerland. Be generous; you've beaten us hollow.

RAINA: Have I not been generous?

THE MAN: Noble! Heroic! But I'm not saved yet. This particular rush will soon pass through; but the pursuit will go on all night by fits and starts. I must take my chance to get off in a quiet interval.

(*Pleasantly*) You don't mind my waiting just a minute or two, do you?

RAINA (*putting on her most genteel society manner*): Oh, not at all. Won't you sit down?

THE MAN: Thanks. (*He sits on the foot of the bed.*)

(RAINA *walks with studied elegance to the ottoman and sits down. Unfortunately she sits on the pistol, and jumps up with a shriek. The man, all nerves, shies like a frightened horse to the other side of the room.*)

THE MAN (*irritably*): Don't frighten me like that. What is it?

RAINA: Your revolver! It was staring that officer in the face all the time. What an escape!

THE MAN (*vexed at being unnecessarily terrified*): Oh, is that all?

RAINA (*staring at him rather superciliously as she conceives a poorer and poorer opinion of him, and feels proportionately more and more at her ease*): I am sorry I frightened you. (*She takes up the pistol and hands it to him*) Pray take it to protect yourself against me.

THE MAN (*grinning wearily at the sarcasm as he takes the pistol*): No use, dear young lady; there's nothing in it. It's not loaded. (*He makes a grimace at it, and drops it disparagingly into his revolver case.*)

RAINA: Load it by all means.

THE MAN: I've no ammunition. What use are cartridges in battle? I always carry chocolate instead; and I finished the last cake of that hours ago.

RAINA (*outraged in her most cherished ideals of manhood*): Chocolate! Do you stuff your pockets with sweets—like a schoolboy—even in the field?

THE MAN (*grinning*): Yes, isn't it contemptible? (*Hungrily*) I wish I had some now.

RAINA: Allow me. (*She sails away scornfully to the chest of drawers*

and returns with the box of confectionery in her hand) I am sorry I have eaten them all except these. (*She offers him the box.*)

THE MAN (*ravenously*): You're an angel! (*He gobbles the contents*) Creams! Delicious! (*He looks anxiously to see whether there are any more. There are none: he can only scrape the box with his fingers and suck them. When that nourishment is exhausted, he accepts the inevitable with pathetic goodhumor and says, with grateful emotion*) Bless you, dear lady! You can always tell an old soldier by the inside of his holsters and cartridge boxes. The young ones carry pistols and cartridges; the old ones, grub. Thank you. (*He hands back the box. She snatches it contemptuously from him and throws it away. He shies again, as if she had meant to strike him*) Ugh! Don't do things so suddenly, gracious lady. It's mean to revenge yourself because I frightened you just now.

RAINA (*loftily*): Frighten me! Do you know, sir, that though I am only a woman, I think I am at heart as brave as you.

THE MAN: I should think so. You haven't been under fire for three days as I have. I can stand two days without showing it much; but no man can stand three days. I'm as nervous as a mouse. (*He sits down on the ottoman, and takes his head in his hands*) Would you like to see me cry?

RAINA (*alarmed*): No.

THE MAN: If you would, all you have to do is to scold me just as if I were a little boy and you my nurse. If I were in camp now, they'd play all sorts of tricks on me.

RAINA (*a little moved*): I'm sorry. I won't scold you. (*Touched by the sympathy in her tone, he raises his head and looks gratefully at her; she immediately draws back and says stiffly*) You must excuse me; our soldiers are not like that. (*She moves away from the ottoman.*)

THE MAN: Oh yes they are. There are only two sorts of soldiers: old ones and young ones. I've served fourteen years; half of your fellows never smelt powder before. Why, how is it that you've just beaten us? Sheer ignorance of the art of war, nothing else. (*Indignantly*) I never saw anything so unprofessional.

RAINA (*ironically*): Oh; was it unprofessional to beat you?

THE MAN: Well, come! is it professional to throw a regiment of cavalry on a battery of machine guns, with the dead certainty that if the guns go off not a horse or man will ever get within fifty yards of the fire? I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw it.

RAINA (*eagerly turning to him, as all her enthusiasm and her dreams of glory rush back on her*): Did you see the great cavalry charge? Oh, tell me about it. Describe it to me.

THE MAN: You never saw a cavalry charge, did you?

RAINA: How could I?

THE MAN: Ah, perhaps not. No: of course not! Well, it's a funny sight. It's like slinging a handful of peas against a window pane: first one comes; then two or three close behind him; and then all the rest in a lump.

RAINA (*her eyes dilating as she raises her clasped hands ecstatically*): Yes, first One! the bravest of the brave!

THE MAN (*prosaically*): Hm! you should see the poor devil pulling at his horse.

RAINA: Why should he pull at his horse?

THE MAN (*impatient of so stupid a question*): It's running away with him, of course; do you suppose the fellow wants to get there before the others and be killed? Then they all come. You can tell the young ones by their wildness and their slashing. The old ones come bunched up under the number one guard; they know that they're mere projectiles, and that it's no use trying to fight. The wounds are mostly broken knees, from the horses cannoning together.

RAINA: Ugh! But I don't believe the first man is a coward. I know he is a hero!

THE MAN (*goodhumoredly*): That's what you'd have said if you'd seen the first man in the charge today.

RAINA (*breathless, forgiving him everything*): Ah, I knew it! Tell me. Tell me about him.

THE MAN: He did it like an operatic tenor. A regular handsome fel-

low, with flashing eyes and lovely moustache, shouting his war-cry and charging like Don Quixote at the windmills. We did laugh.

RAINA: You dared to laugh!

THE MAN: Yes; but when the sergeant ran up as white as a sheet, and told us they'd sent us the wrong ammunition, and that we couldn't fire a round for the next ten minutes, we laughed at the other side of our mouths. I never felt so sick in my life, though I've been in one or two very tight places. And I hadn't even a revolver cartridge, only chocolate. We'd no bayonets—nothing. Of course, they just cut us to bits. And there was Don Quixote flourishing like a drum major, thinking he'd done the cleverest thing ever known, whereas he ought to be courtmartialled for it. Of all the fools ever let loose on a field of battle, that man must be the very maddest. He and his regiment simply committed suicide; only the pistol missed fire, that's all.

RAINA (*deeply wounded, but steadfastly loyal to her ideals*): Indeed! Would you know him again if you saw him?

THE MAN: Shall I ever forget him!

(*She again goes to the chest of drawers. He watches her with a vague hope that she may have something more for him to eat. She takes the portrait from its stand and brings it to him.*)

RAINA: That is a photograph of the gentleman—the patriot and hero —to whom I am betrothed.

THE MAN (*recognizing it with a shock*): I'm really very sorry. (*Looking at her*) Was it fair to lead me on? (*He looks at the portrait again*) Yes, that's Don Quixote; not a doubt of it. (*He stifles a laugh.*)

RAINA (*quickly*): Why do you laugh?

THE MAN (*apologetic, but still greatly tickled*): I didn't laugh, I assure you. At least I didn't mean to. But when I think of him charging the windmills and imagining he was doing the finest thing—(*He chokes with suppressed laughter.*)

RAINA (*sternly*): Give me back the portrait, sir.

THE MAN (*with sincere remorse*): Of course. Certainly. I'm really very sorry. (*He hands her the picture. She deliberately kisses it and looks him straight in the face before returning to the chest of drawers to replace it. He follows her, apologizing*) Perhaps I'm quite wrong, you know; no doubt I am. Most likely he had got wind of the cartridge business somehow and knew it was a safe job.

RAINA: That is to say, he was a pretender and a coward! You did not dare say that before.

THE MAN (*with a comic gesture of despair*): It's no use, dear lady; I can't make you see it from the professional point of view. (*As he turns away to get back to the ottoman, a couple of distant shots threaten renewed trouble.*)

RAINA (*sternly, as she sees him listening to the shots*): So much the better for you!

THE MAN (*turning*): How?

RAINA: You are my enemy; and you are at my mercy. What would I do if I were a professional soldier?

THE MAN: Ah, true, dear young lady; you're always right. I know how good you've been to me; to my last hour I shall remember those three chocolate creams. It was unsoldierly; but it was angelic.

RAINA (*coldly*): Thank you. And now I will do a soldierly thing. You cannot stay here after what you have just said about my future husband; but I will go out on the balcony and see whether it is safe for you to climb down into the street. (*She turns to the window.*)

THE MAN (*changing countenance*): Down that waterpipe! Stop! Wait! I can't! I daren't! The very thought of it makes me giddy. I came up it fast enough with death behind me. But to face it now in cold blood—! (*He sinks on the ottoman*) It's no use; I give up; I'm beaten. Give the alarm. (*He drops his head on his hands in the deepest dejection.*)

RAINA (*disarmed by pity*): Come, don't be disheartened. (*She stoops over him almost maternally; he shakes his head*) Oh, you are a very poor soldier: a chocolate cream soldier! Come, cheer up! it takes less courage to climb down than to face capture; remember that.

THE MAN (*dreamily, lulled by her voice*): No, capture only means death; and death is sleep: oh, sleep, sleep, sleep, undisturbed sleep! Climbing down the pipe means doing something—exerting myself—thinking! Death ten times over first.

RAINA (*softly and wonderingly, catching the rhythm of his weariness*): Are you as sleepy as that?

THE MAN: I've not had two hours undisturbed sleep since I joined. I haven't closed my eyes for forty-eight hours.

RAINA (*at her wit's end*): But what am I to do with you?

THE MAN (*staggering up, roused by her desperation*): Of course. I must do something. (*He shakes himself, pulls himself together, and speaks with rallied vigor and courage*) You see, sleep or no sleep, hunger or no hunger, tired or not tired, you can always do a thing when you know it must be done. Well, that pipe must be got down. (*He hits himself on the chest*) Do you hear that, you chocolate cream soldier? (*He turns to the window.*)

RAINA (*anxiously*): But if you fall?

THE MAN: I shall sleep as if the stones were a feather bed. Goodbye. (*He makes boldly for the window; and his hand is on the shutter when there is a terrible burst of firing in the street beneath.*)

RAINA (*rushing to him*): Stop! (*She seizes him recklessly and pulls him quite round*) They'll kill you.

THE MAN (*coolly, but attentively*): Never mind: this sort of thing is all in my day's work. I'm bound to take my chance. (*Decisively*) Now do what I tell you. Put out the candle, so that they shan't see the light when I open the shutters. And keep away from the window, whatever you do. If they see me they're sure to have a shot at me.

RAINA (*clinging to him*): They're sure to see you: it's bright moonlight. I'll save you. Oh, how can you be so indifferent! You want me to save you, don't you?

THE MAN: I really don't want to be troublesome. (*She shakes him in her impatience*) I am not indifferent, dear young lady, I assure you. But how is it to be done?

RAINA: Come away from the window. (*She takes him firmly back to the middle of the room. The moment she releases him he turns mechanically towards the window again. She seizes him and turns him back, exclaiming*) Please! (*He becomes motionless, like a hypnotized rabbit, his fatigue gaining fast on him. She releases him and addresses him patronizingly*) Now listen. You must trust to our hospitality. You do not yet know in whose house you are. I am a Petkoff.

THE MAN: A pet what?

RAINA (*rather indignantly*): I mean that I belong to the family of the Petkoffs, the richest and best known in our country.

THE MAN: Oh yes, of course. I beg your pardon. The Petkoffs, to be sure. How stupid of me!

RAINA: You know you never heard of them until this moment. How can you stoop to pretend!

THE MAN: Forgive me: I'm too tired to think; and the change of subject was too much for me. Don't scold me.

RAINA: I forgot. It might make you cry. (*He nods, quite seriously. She pouts and then resumes her patronizing tone*) I must tell you that my father holds the highest command of any Bulgarian in our army. He is (*proudly*) a Major.

THE MAN (*pretending to be deeply impressed*): A Major! Bless me! Think of that!

RAINA: You showed great ignorance in thinking that it was necessary to climb up to the balcony because ours is the only private house that has two rows of windows. There is a flight of stairs inside to get up and down by.

THE MAN: Stairs! How grand! You live in great luxury indeed, dear young lady.

RAINA: Do you know what a library is?

THE MAN: A library? A roomful of books?

RAINA: Yes. We have one, the only one in Bulgaria.

THE MAN: Actually a real library! I should like to see that.

RAINA (*affectedly*): I tell you these things to show you that you are not in the house of ignorant country folk who would kill you the moment they saw your Serbian uniform, but among civilized people. We go to Bucharest every year for the opera season; and I have spent a whole month in Vienna.

THE MAN: I saw that, dear young lady. I saw at once that you knew the world.

RAINA: Have you ever seen the opera of Ernani?

THE MAN: Is that the one with the devil in it in red velvet, and a soldiers' chorus?

RAINA (*contemptuously*): No!

THE MAN (*stifling a heavy sigh of weariness*): Then I don't know it.

RAINA: I thought you might have remembered the great scene where Ernani, flying from his foes just as you are tonight, takes refuge in the castle of his bitterest enemy, an old Castilian noble. The noble refuses to give him up. His guest is sacred to him.

THE MAN (*quickly, waking up a little*): Have your people got that notion?

RAINA (*with dignity*): My mother and I can understand that notion. as you call it. And if instead of threatening me with your pistol as you did, you had simply thrown yourself as a fugitive on our hospitality, you would have been as safe as in your father's house.

THE MAN: Quite sure?

RAINA (*turning her back on him in disgust*): Oh, it is useless to try to make you understand.

THE MAN: Don't be angry; you see how awkward it would be for me if there was any mistake. My father is a very hospitable man: he keeps six hotels; but I couldn't trust him as far as that. What about your father?

RAINA: He is away at Slivnitza fighting for his country. I answer for

your safety. There is my hand in pledge of it. Will that reassure you? (*She offers him her hand.*)

THE MAN (*looking dubiously at his own hand*): Better not touch my hand, dear young lady. I must have a wash first.

RAINA (*touched*): That is very nice of you. I see that you are a gentleman.

THE MAN (*puzzled*): Eh?

RAINA: You must not think I am surprised. Bulgarians of really good standing—people in our position—wash their hands nearly every day. So you see I can appreciate your delicacy. You may take my hand. (*She offers it again.*)

THE MAN (*kissing it with his hands behind his back*): Thanks, gracious young lady; I feel safe at last. And now would you mind breaking the news to your mother? I had better not stay here secretly longer than is necessary.

RAINA: If you will be so good as to keep perfectly still whilst I am away.

THE MAN: Certainly. (*He sits down on the ottoman.*)

(RAINA *goes to the bed and wraps herself in the fur cloak. His eyes close. She goes to the door. Turning for a last look at him, she sees that he is dropping off to sleep.*)

RAINA (*at the door*): You are not going asleep, are you? (*He murmurs inarticulately; she runs to him and shakes him*) Do you hear? Wake up; you are falling asleep.

THE MAN: Eh? Falling aslee—? Oh no, not the least in the world; I was only thinking. It's all right; I'm wide awake.

RAINA (*severely*): Will you please stand up while I am away. (*He rises reluctantly*) All the time, mind.

THE MAN (*standing unsteadily*): Certainly. Certainly; you may depend on me.

(RAINA *looks doubtfully at him. He smiles weakly. She goes reluc-*

tantly, turning again at the door, and almost catching him in the act of yawning. She goes out.)

THE MAN (*drowsily*): Sleep, sleep, sleep, sleep, slee—(*The words trail off into a murmur. He wakes again with a shock on the point of falling*) Where am I? That's what I want to know: where am I? Must keep awake. Nothing keeps me awake except danger: remember that: (*intently*) danger, danger, danger, dan—(*trailing off again; another shock*) Where's danger? Mus' find it. (*He starts off vaguely round the room in search of it*) What am I looking for? Sleep—danger—don't know. (*He stumbles against the bed*) Ah yes, now I know. All right now. I'm to go to bed, but not to sleep. Be sure not to sleep, because of danger. Not to lie down either, only sit down. (*He sits on the bed. A blissful expression comes into his face*) Ah! (*With a happy sigh he sinks back at full length, lifts his boots into the bed with a final effort, and falls fast asleep instantly.*)

(CATHERINE *comes in, followed by* RAINA.)

RAINA (*looking at the ottoman*): He's gone! I left him here.

CATHERINE: Here! Then he must have climbed down from the—

RAINA (*seeing him*): Oh! (*She points.*)

CATHERINE (*scandalized*): Well! (*She strides to the bed,* RAINA *following until she is opposite her on the other side*) He's fast asleep. The brute!

RAINA (*anxiously*): Sh!

CATHERINE (*shaking him*): Sir! (*Shaking him again, harder*) Sir!! (*Vehemently, shaking very hard*) Sir!!!

RAINA (*catching her arm*): Don't, mamma; the poor darling is worn out. Let him sleep.

CATHERINE (*letting him go, and turning amazed to* RAINA): The poor darling! Raina!!! (*She looks sternly at her daughter.*)

(*The man sleeps profoundly.*)

(*The Curtain Falls.*)

The most difficult problem in reading drama is to realize that a play is a theater piece to be seen and heard; hence it is important to understand the relationship of such basic stage devices as sets, costumes, props, and sound and lighting effects to the literary effects of the entire play. In studying *Arms and the Man* we shall take up each of these theatrical devices in turn, studying the ways in which Shaw employs them to help achieve his artistic purpose. Since Shaw expected his plays to be read, he incorporated in the text many stage directions which would ordinarily be left to the discretion of the director. Often there are directions for effects that cannot be projected from the stage; for example, "On the balcony a young lady, intensely conscious of the romantic beauty of the night, and of the fact that her own youth and beauty are part of it, is gazing at the snowy Balkans." Point out several other examples.

SETTING

The setting reveals much about the character of the Petkoff family and, more specifically, about Raina. Shaw carefully notifies us that the native Bulgarian furnishings, the ornamental fabrics, the ottoman, and the wooden shrine above the bed are Oriental, soft, and luxurious, whereas those furnishings imported from Vienna — the washbasin and the wallpaper — are ugly and "paltry." These visual effects suggest that the Petkoffs are fundamentally split between their own Eastern culture and modernism as imported from Vienna.

How do the lighting effects and the backdrop enhance the opening mood of the play?

COSTUMES AND PROPS

The costumes and props contribute to both characterization and action. Raina's expensive cloak of fur emphasizes her wealth, but also offers Bluntschli a very practical means of protection. His unchivalrous conduct revolts Raina, who is clad only in a scanty nightgown. Bluntschli's grimy, disheveled appearance and plain features are in contrast to Sergius' dynamic good looks in the photograph and to his military splendor in Act Two. This photograph

helps establish Sergius' character and Raina's attitude toward him before his entrance, and also permits his character to be played off against Bluntschli's early in the play. Both the pistol and the box of chocolate creams point up Bluntschli's practicality: he keeps chocolate in his cartridge case instead of ammunition. The box of chocolate creams becomes a symbol of a cowardly solider which at first applies to Bluntschli, but in Act Three the application is given another twist. What purposes are served by Raina's paper-backed novels and Catherine's gown?

SUSPENSE

Shaw uses theatrical devices to produce suspense and a sense of apprehension and to remind the audience constantly of war. Much of the anticipation is caused by the slow pace and the dramatic silences. At Bluntschli's entrance suspense is created by combining many sound and lighting effects. A distant shot is heard; when Raina blows the candle out, the stage is thrown into complete darkness except for the dim light before the image over the bed and the starlight seen through the shutters. There is more firing; the shutters are gradually opened and a man enters through them; there is silence except for the sound of panting, until finally a match is lit. Later the search by the Prussian officer produces more suspense, heightened this time by Shaw's planting of the pistol in full view of the audience and by his having the action take place behind the ottoman on which the pistol lies. What other means does he use to focus a melodramatic bit of action on the pistol? What other rapid impacts are combined at the same time to produce dramatic tension?

CONFLICTS

It is a stereotype of dramatic criticism to say that conflict is the heart of drama. The point can be easily demonstrated in Act One. Raina and Bluntschli here represent two opposite points of view toward military conduct. Bluntschli is the practical, experienced soldier who faces war with grim realism, whereas Raina sees war as a romantic display of chivalry and valor. Bulgaria in 1885 is feeling the influence of modernism from the West, but the Petkoffs are not yet able to differentiate between the romantic and the practical aspects of that modernism. This fact helps to explain the confusion of ideals and the inharmoniousness of the furnishings of Raina's room.

CHARACTERIZATION

Raina's gestures, facial expressions, and manner of speaking are meant to impress upon the audience her love of the noble, grand, and dramatic. Most of the characteristics are suggested by the stage directions (she speaks "with a cry of delight," p. 10; "rapturously," p. 10; "ecstatically," p. 10; "disdainfully," p. 14; "impulsively," p. 16) . Her actions and gestures also have a carefully planned effect which is made clear in her kissing her mother, her stalking about the stage, and her worship of Sergius' photograph. At what other moments is Raina conscious of playing a part?

After news of Sergius' victory in leading the cavalry charge is announced by Catherine, Raina immediately reveals her heroic ideals that have come from reading Byron and Pushkin and from attending the opera in Bucharest. These ideals are made explicit on page 11 when Raina says, "Oh, to think that it was all true! that Sergius is just as splendid and noble as he looks! that the world is really a glorious world for women who can see its glory and men who can act its romance!"

In appearance, actions, and attitudes Bluntschli seems to be the exact opposite of all that Raina values. He is ragged, exhausted, and homely, but he nevertheless acts with assured efficiency in handling Raina, thus preventing his own capture and death. Raina's objections to Bluntschli all stem from his refusal to live up to her ideal conception of a soldier's conduct. He points a pistol at a lady, withholds her cloak, keeps chocolates in his cartridge case, threatens to cry, makes fun of the operatic cavalry charge of her Byronic lover, and in fact ridicules all of Raina's ideals.

TONE

The tone, or the total emotional effect, of Act One is one of amusement mingled with suspense. Since most of the conflicts of point of view in Act One are presented in a mildly satiric way, the audience may take it for granted that they are not to be taken too seriously. How does Shaw, for example, satirize the Petkoff family's social pretensions? The final attitude of the audience is an amused contempt for Raina and the romantic idea of warfare, an amused respect for Bluntschli, and a general feeling of expectation. This expectation is created by Bluntschli's position at the curtain and by Raina's remark, "the poor darling is worn out." This comment and her earlier doubts about the validity of her ideals foreshadow the events of the next two acts.

Sergius' act

Act Two

THE SIXTH *of March, 1886. In the garden of* MAJOR PETKOFF'S *house. It is a fine spring morning; the garden looks fresh and pretty. Beyond the paling the tops of a couple of minarets can be seen, showing that there is a valley there, with the little town in it. A few miles further the Balkan mountains rise and shut in the landscape. Within the garden, the side of the house is seen on the left, with a garden door reached by a little flight of steps. On the right the stable yard, with its gateway, encroaches on the garden. There are fruit bushes along the paling and house, covered with washing spread out to dry. A path runs by the house, and rises by two steps at the corner, where it turns out of sight. In the middle, a small table, with two bent wood chairs at it, is laid for breakfast with Turkish coffee pot, cups, rolls, etc.; but the cups have been used and the bread broken. There is a wooden garden seat against the wall on the right.*

LOUKA, *smoking a cigaret, is standing between the table and the house, turning her back with angry disdain on a man servant who is lecturing her. He is a middle-aged man of cool temperament and low but clear and keen intelligence, with the complacency of the servant who values himself on his rank in servitude, and the imperturbability of the accurate calculator who has no illusions. He wears a white Bulgarian costume: jacket with embroidered border, sash, wide knickerbockers, and decorated gaiters. His head is shaved up to the crown, giving him a high Japanese forehead. His name is* NICOLA.

NICOLA: Be warned in time, Louka: mend your manners. I know the mistress. She is so grand that she never dreams that any servant could dare be disrespectful to her; but if she once suspects that you are defying her, out you go.

LOUKA: I do defy her. I will defy her. What do I care for her?

NICOLA: If you quarrel with the family, I never can marry you. It's the same as if you quarrelled with me!

LOUKA: You take her part against me, do you?

NICOLA (*sedately*): I shall always be dependent on the good will of the family. When I leave their service and start a shop in Sofia, their custom will be half my capital; their bad word would ruin me.

LOUKA: You have no spirit. I should like to catch them saying a word against me!

NICOLA (*pityingly*): I should have expected more sense from you, Louka. But you're young, you're young!

LOUKA: Yes; and you like me the better for it, don't you? But I know some family secrets they wouldn't care to have told, young as I am. Let them quarrel with me if they dare!

NICOLA (*with compassionate superiority*): Do you know what they would do if they heard you talk like that?

LOUKA: What could they do?

NICOLA: Discharge you for untruthfulness. Who would believe any stories you told after that? Who would give you another situation? Who in this house would dare be seen speaking to you ever again? How long would your father be left on his little farm? (*She impatiently throws away the end of her cigaret, and stamps on it*) Child, you don't know the power such high people have over the like of you and me when we try to rise out of our poverty against them. (*He goes close to her and lowers his voice*) Look at me, ten years in their service. Do you think I know no secrets? I know things about the mistress that she wouldn't have the master know for a thousand levas. I know things about him that she wouldn't let him hear the last of for six months if I blabbed them to her. I know things about Raina that would break off her match with Sergius if—

LOUKA (*turning on him quickly*): How do you know? I never told you!

NICOLA (*opening his eyes cunningly*): So that's your little secret, is it? I thought it might be something like that. Well, you take my advice and be respectful; and make the mistress feel that no matter what you know or don't know, she can depend on you to hold your

tongue and serve the family faithfully. That's what they like; and that's how you'll make most out of them.

LOUKA (*with searching scorn*): You have the soul of a servant, Nicola.

NICOLA (*complacently*): Yes, that's the secret of success in service.

(*A loud knocking with a whip handle on a wooden door is heard from the stable yard.*)

MALE VOICE OUTSIDE: Hollo! Hollo there! Nicola!

LOUKA: Master! back from the war!

NICOLA (*quickly*): My word for it, Louka, the war's over. Off with you and get some fresh coffee. (*He runs out into the stable yard.*)

LOUKA (*as she collects the coffee pot and cups on the tray, and carries it into the house*): You'll never put the soul of a servant into me.

(MAJOR PETKOFF *comes from the stable yard, followed by* NICOLA. *He is a cheerful, excitable, insignificant, unpolished man of about 50, naturally unambitious except as to his income and his importance in local society, but just now greatly pleased with the military rank which the war has thrust on him as a man of consequence in his town. The fever of plucky patriotism which the Serbian attack roused in all the Bulgarians has pulled him through the war; but he is obviously glad to be home again.*)

PETKOFF (*pointing to the table with his whip*): Breakfast out here, eh?

NICOLA: Yes, sir. The mistress and Miss Raina have just gone in.

PETKOFF (*sitting down and taking a roll*): Go in and say I've come; and get me some fresh coffee.

NICOLA: It's coming, sir. (*He goes to the house door.* LOUKA, *with fresh coffee, a clean cup, and a brandy bottle on her tray, meets him*) Have you told the mistress?

LOUKA: Yes, she's coming.

(NICOLA *goes into the house.* LOUKA *brings the coffee to the table.*)

PETKOFF: Well, the Serbs haven't run away with you, have they?

LOUKA: No, sir.

PETKOFF: That's right. Have you brought me some cognac?

LOUKA (*putting the bottle on the table*): Here, sir.

PETKOFF: That's right. (*He pours some into his coffee.*)

(CATHERINE, *who, having at this early hour made only a very perfunctory toilet, wears a Bulgarian apron over a once brilliant but now half worn-out dressing gown, and a colored handkerchief tied over her thick black hair, comes from the house with Turkish slippers on her bare feet, looking astonishingly handsome and stately under all the circumstances.* LOUKA *goes into the house.*)

CATHERINE: My dear Paul, what a surprise for us! (*She stoops over the back of his chair to kiss him*) Have they brought you fresh coffee?

PETKOFF: Yes, Louka's been looking after me. The war's over. The treaty was signed three days ago at Bucharest, and the decree for our army to demobilize was issued yesterday.

CATHERINE (*springing erect, with flashing eyes*): Paul, have you let the Austrians force you to make peace?

PETKOFF (*submissively*): My dear, they didn't consult me. What could *I* do? (*She sits down and turns away from him*) But of course we saw to it that the treaty was an honorable one. It declares peace—

CATHERINE (*outraged*): Peace!

PETKOFF (*appeasing her*):—but not friendly relations, remember that. They wanted to put that in, but I insisted on its being struck out. What more could I do?

CATHERINE: You could have annexed Serbia and made Prince Alexander Emperor of the Balkans. That's what I would have done.

PETKOFF: I don't doubt it in the least, my dear. But I should have

had to subdue the whole Austrian Empire first, and that would have kept me too long away from you. I missed you greatly.

CATHERINE (*relenting*): Ah! (*She stretches her hand affectionately across the table to squeeze his.*)

PETKOFF: And how have you been, my dear?

CATHERINE: Oh, my usual sore throats; that's all.

PETKOFF (*with conviction*): That comes from washing your neck every day. I've often told you so.

CATHERINE: Nonsense, Paul!

PETKOFF (*over his coffee and cigaret*): I don't believe in going too far with these modern customs. All this washing can't be good for the health; it's not natural. There was an Englishman at Philippopolis who used to wet himself all over with cold water every morning when he got up. Disgusting! It all comes from the English: their climate makes them so dirty that they have to be perpetually washing themselves. Look at my father! he never had a bath in his life; and he lived to be ninety-eight, the healthiest man in Bulgaria. I don't mind a good wash once a week to keep up my position; but once a day is carrying the thing to a ridiculous extreme.

CATHERINE: You are a barbarian at heart still, Paul. I hope you behaved yourself before all those Russian officers.

PETKOFF: I did my best. I took care to let them know that we have a library.

CATHERINE: Ah, but you didn't tell them that we have an electric bell in it? I have had one put up.

PETKOFF: What's an electric bell?

CATHERINE: You touch a button; something tinkles in the kitchen; and then Nicola comes up.

PETKOFF: Why not shout for him?

CATHERINE: Civilized people never shout for their servants. I've learnt that while you were away.

PETKOFF: Well, I'll tell you something I've learnt too. Civilized people don't hang out their washing to dry where visitors can see it; so you'd better have all that (*indicating the clothes on the bushes*) put somewhere else.

CATHERINE: Oh, that's absurd, Paul; I don't believe really refined people notice such things.

SERGIUS (*knocking at the stable gates*): Gate, Nicola!

PETKOFF: There's Sergius. (*Shouting*) Hollo, Nicola!

CATHERINE: Oh, don't shout, Paul; it really isn't nice.

PETKOFF: Bosh! (*He shouts louder than before*) Nicola!

NICOLA (*appearing at the house door*): Yes, sir.

PETKOFF: Are you deaf? Don't you hear Major Saranoff knocking? Bring him round this way. (*He pronounces the name with the stress on the second syllable: Sarahnoff.*)

NICOLA: Yes, Major. (*He goes into the stable yard.*)

PETKOFF: You must talk to him, my dear, until Raina takes him off our hands. He bores my life out about our not promoting him. Over my head, if you please.

CATHERINE: He certainly ought to be promoted when he marries Raina. Besides, the country should insist on having at least one native general.

PETKOFF: Yes, so that he could throw away whole brigades instead of regiments. It's no use, my dear; he hasn't the slightest chance of promotion until we're quite sure that the peace will be a lasting one.

NICOLA (*at the gate, announcing*): Major Sergius Saranoff! (*He goes into the house and returns presently with a third chair, which he places at the table. He then withdraws.*)

(MAJOR SERGIUS SARANOFF, *the original of the portrait in* RAINA'S *room, is a tall romantically handsome man, with the physical hardihood, the high spirit, and the susceptible imagination of an untamed mountaineer chieftain. But his remarkable personal distinction is of*

a characteristically civilized type. The ridges of his eyebrows, curving with an interrogative twist round the projections at the outer corners; his jealously observant eye; his nose, thin, keen, and apprehensive in spite of the pugnacious high bridge and large nostril; his assertive chin would not be out of place in a Parisian salon, showing that the clever imaginative barbarian has an acute critical faculty which has been thrown into intense activity by the arrival of western civilization in the Balkans. The result is precisely what the advent of nineteenth century thought first produced in England: to wit, Byronism. By his brooding on the perpetual failure, not only of others, but of himself, to live up to his ideals; by his consequent cynical scorn for humanity; by his jejune credulity as to the absolute validity of his concepts and the unworthiness of the world in disregarding them; by his wincings and mockeries under the sting of the petty disillusions which every hour spent among men brings to his sensitive observation, he has acquired the half tragic, half ironic air, the mysterious moodiness, the suggestion of a strange and terrible history that has left nothing but undying remorse, by which Childe Harold fascinated the grandmothers of his English contemporaries. It is clear that here or nowhere is RAINA'S *ideal hero.* CATHERINE *is hardly less enthusiastic about him than her daughter and much less reserved in showing her enthusiasm. As he enters from the stable gate, she rises effusively to greet him.* PETKOFF *is distinctly less disposed to make a fuss about him.*)

PETKOFF: Here already, Sergius! Glad to see you.

CATHERINE: My dear Sergius! (*She holds out both her hands.*)

SERGIUS (*kissing them with scrupulous gallantry*): My dear mother, if I may call you so.

PETKOFF (*drily*): Mother-in-law, Sergius, mother-in-law! Sit down, and have some coffee.

SERGIUS: Thank you, none for me. (*He gets away from the table with a certain distaste for* PETKOFF'S *enjoyment of it and posts himself with conscious dignity against the rail of the steps leading to the house.*)

CATHERINE: You look superb. The campaign has improved you, Sergius. Everybody here is mad about you. We were all wild with enthusiasm about that magnificent cavalry charge.

SERGIUS (*with grave irony*): Madam, it was the cradle and the grave

of my military reputation.

CATHERINE: How so?

SERGIUS: I won the battle the wrong way when our worthy Russian generals were losing it the right way. In short, I upset their plans, and wounded their self-esteem. Two Cossack colonels had their regiments routed on the most correct principles of scientific warfare. Two major-generals got killed strictly according to military etiquette. The two colonels are now major-generals; and I am still a simple major.

CATHERINE: You shall not remain so, Sergius. The women are on your side, and they will see that justice is done you.

SERGIUS: It is too late. I have only waited for the peace to send in my resignation.

PETKOFF (*dropping his cup in his amazement*): Your resignation!

CATHERINE: Oh, you must withdraw it!

SERGIUS (*with resolute measured emphasis, folding his arms*): I never withdraw.

PETKOFF (*vexed*): Now who could have supposed you were going to do such a thing?

SERGIUS (*with fire*): Everyone that knew me. But enough of myself and my affairs. How is Raina; and where is Raina?

RAINA (*suddenly coming round the corner of the house and standing at the top of the steps in the path*): Raina is here.

(*She makes a charming picture as they turn to look at her. She wears an underdress of pale green silk, draped with an overdress of thin ecru canvas embroidered with gold. She is crowned with a dainty eastern cap of gold tinsel.* SERGIUS *goes impulsively to meet her. Posing regally, she presents her hand; he drops chivalrously on one knee and kisses it.*)

PETKOFF (*aside to* CATHERINE, *beaming with parental pride*): Pretty, isn't it? She always appears at the right moment.

CATHERINE (*impatiently*): Yes, she listens for it. It is an abominable habit.

(SERGIUS *leads* RAINA *forward with splendid gallantry. When they arrive at the table, she turns to him with a bend of the head; he bows; and thus they separate, he coming to his place and she going behind her father's chair.*)

RAINA (*stooping and kissing her father*): Dear father! Welcome home!

PETKOFF (*patting her cheek*): My little pet girl. (*He kisses her. She goes to the chair left by* NICOLA *for* SERGIUS *and sits down.*)

CATHERINE: And so you're no longer a soldier, Sergius.

SERGIUS: I am no longer a soldier. Soldiering, my dear madam, is the coward's art of attacking mercilessly when you are strong and keeping out of harm's way when you are weak. That is the whole secret of successful fighting. Get your enemy at a disadvantage and never, on any account, fight him on equal terms.

PETKOFF: They wouldn't let us make a fair stand-up fight of it. However, I suppose soldiering has to be a trade like any other trade.

SERGIUS: Precisely. But I have no ambition to shine as a tradesman; so I have taken the advice of that bagman of a captain that settled the exchange of prisoners with us at Pirot, and given it up.

PETKOFF: What! that Swiss fellow? Sergius, I've often thought of that exchange since. He over-reached us about those horses.

SERGIUS: Of course he over-reached us. His father was a hotel and livery stable keeper, and he owed his first step to his knowledge of horse-dealing. (*With mock enthusiasm*) Ah, he was a soldier, every inch a soldier! If only I had bought the horses for my regiment instead of foolishly leading it into danger, I should have been a field-marshal now!

CATHERINE: A Swiss? What was he doing in the Serbian army?

PETKOFF: A volunteer, of course; keen on picking up his profession. (*Chuckling*) We shouldn't have been able to begin fighting if these foreigners hadn't shown us how to do it; we knew nothing about it;

and neither did the Serbs. Egad, there'd have been no war without them!

RAINA: Are there many Swiss officers in the Serbian Army?

PETKOFF: No. All Austrians, just as our officers were all Russians. This was the only Swiss I came across. I'll never trust a Swiss again. He humbugged us into giving him fifty ablebodied men for two hundred worn-out chargers. They weren't even eatable!

SERGIUS: We were two children in the hands of that consummate soldier, Major, simply two innocent little children.

RAINA: What was he like?

CATHERINE: Oh, Raina, what a silly question!

SERGIUS: He was like a commercial traveller in uniform. Bourgeois to his boots!

PETKOFF (*grinning*): Sergius, tell Catherine that queer story his friend told us about how he escaped after Slivnitza. You remember. About his being hid by two women.

SERGIUS (*with bitter irony*): Oh yes, quite a romance! He was serving in the very battery I so unprofessionally charged. Being a thorough soldier, he ran away like the rest of them, with our cavalry at his heels. To escape their sabres he climbed a waterpipe and made his way into the bedroom of a young Bulgarian lady. The young lady was enchanted by his persuasive commercial traveller's manners. She very modestly entertained him for an hour or so, and then called in her mother lest her conduct should appear unmaidenly. The old lady was equally fascinated; and the fugitive was sent on his way in the morning, disguised in an old coat belonging to the master of the house, who was away at the war.

RAINA (*rising with marked stateliness*): Your life in the camp has made you coarse, Sergius. I did not think you would have repeated such a story before me. (*She turns away coldly.*)

CATHERINE (*also rising*): She is right, Sergius. If such women exist, we should be spared the knowledge of them.

PETKOFF: Pooh! nonsense! what does it matter?

SERGIUS (*ashamed*): No, Petkoff, I was wrong. (*To* RAINA, *with earnest humility*) I beg your pardon. I have behaved abominably. Forgive me, Raina. (*She bows reservedly*) And you too, madam. (CATHERINE *bows graciously and sits down. He proceeds solemnly, again addressing* RAINA) The glimpses I have had of the seamy side of life during the last few months have made me cynical; but I should not have brought my cynicism here; least of all into your presence, Raina. I—(*Here, turning to the others, he is evidently going to begin a long speech when the* MAJOR *interrupts him.*)

PETKOFF: Stuff and nonsense, Sergius! That's quite enough fuss about nothing; a soldier's daughter should be able to stand up without flinching to a little strong conversation. (*He rises*) Come, it's time for us to get to business. We have to make up our minds how those three regiments are to get back to Philippopolis; there's no forage for them on the Sofia route. (*He goes towards the house*) Come along. (SERGIUS *is about to follow him when* CATHERINE *rises and intervenes.*)

CATHERINE: Oh, Paul, can't you spare Sergius for a few moments? Raina has hardly seen him yet. Perhaps I can help you to settle about the regiments.

SERGIUS (*protesting*): My dear madam, impossible; you—

CATHERINE (*stopping him playfully*): You stay here, my dear Sergius; there's no hurry. I have a word or two to say to Paul. (SERGIUS *instantly bows and steps back*) Now, dear (*taking* PETKOFF'S *arm*), come and see the electric bell.

PETKOFF: Oh, very well, very well.

(*They go into the house together affectionately.* SERGIUS, *left alone with* RAINA, *looks anxiously at her, fearing that she is still offended. She smiles and stretches out her arms to him.*)

SERGIUS (*hastening to her*): Am I forgiven?

RAINA (*placing her hands on his shoulders as she looks up at him with admiration and worship*): My hero! My king!

SERGIUS: My queen! (*He kisses her on the forehead.*)

RAINA: How I have envied you, Sergius! You have been out in the

world, on the field of battle, able to prove yourself there worthy of any woman in the world; whilst I have had to sit at home inactive—dreaming—useless—doing nothing that could give me the right to call myself worthy of any man.

SERGIUS: Dearest, all my deeds have been yours. You inspired me. I have gone through the war like a knight in a tournament with his lady looking down at him!

RAINA: And you have never been absent from my thoughts for a moment. (*Very solemnly*) Sergius, I think we two have found the higher love. When I think of you, I feel that I could never do a base deed or think an ignoble thought.

SERGIUS: My lady and my saint! (*He clasps her reverently.*)

RAINA (*returning his embrace*): My lord and my—

SERGIUS: Sh—sh! Let me be the worshipper, dear. You little know how unworthy even the best man is of a girl's pure passion!

RAINA: I trust you. I love you. You will never disappoint me, Sergius. (LOUKA *is heard singing within the house. They quickly release each other*) I can't pretend to talk indifferently before her; my heart is too full. (LOUKA *comes from the house with her tray. She goes to the table and begins to clear it, with her back turned to them*) I will get my hat, and then we can go out until lunch time. Wouldn't you like that?

SERGIUS: Be quick. If you are away five minutes, it will seem five hours. (RAINA *runs to the top of the steps and turns there to exchange looks with him and wave him a kiss with both hands. He looks after her with emotion for a moment, then turns slowly away, his face radiant with the loftiest exaltation. The movement shifts his field of vision, into the corner of which there now comes the tail of* LOUKA'S *double apron. His attention is arrested at once. He takes a stealthy look at her and begins to twirl his moustache mischievously, with his left hand akimbo on his hip. Finally, striking the ground with his heels in something of a cavalry swagger, he strolls over to the other side of the table, opposite her, and says*) Louka, do you know what the higher love is?

LOUKA (*astonished*): No, sir.

SERGIUS: Very fatiguing thing to keep up for any length of time, Louka. One feels the need of some relief after it.

LOUKA (*innocently*): Perhaps you would like some coffee, sir? (*She stretches her hand across the table for the coffee pot.*)

SERGIUS (*taking her hand*): Thank you, Louka.

LOUKA (*pretending to pull*): Oh, sir, you know I didn't mean that. I'm surprised at you!

SERGIUS (*coming clear of the table and drawing her with him*): I am surprised at myself, Louka. What would Sergius, the hero of Slivnitza, say if he saw me now? What would Sergius, the apostle of the higher love, say if he saw me now? What would the half dozen Sergiuses who keep popping in and out of this handsome figure of mine say if they caught us here? (*Letting go her hand and slipping his arm dexterously round her waist*) Do you consider my figure handsome, Louka?

LOUKA: Let me go, sir. I shall be disgraced. (*She struggles; he holds her inexorably*) Oh, will you let go?

SERGIUS (*looking straight into her eyes*): No.

LOUKA: Then stand back where we can't be seen. Have you no common sense?

SERGIUS: Ah! that's reasonable. (*He takes her into the stableyard gateway, where they are hidden from the house.*)

LOUKA (*plaintively*): I may have been seen from the windows; Miss Raina is sure to be spying about after you.

SERGIUS (*stung, letting her go*): Take care, Louka. I may be worthless enough to betray the higher love, but do not you insult it.

LOUKA (*demurely*): Not for the world, sir, I'm sure. May I go on with my work, please, now?

SERGIUS (*again putting his arm round her*): You are a provoking little witch, Louka. If you were in love with me, would you spy out of windows on me?

LOUKA: Well, you see, sir, since you say you are half a dozen different gentlemen all at once, I should have a great deal to look after.

SERGIUS (*charmed*): Witty as well as pretty. (*He tries to kiss her.*)

LOUKA (*avoiding him*): No, I don't want your kisses. Gentlefolk are all alike: you making love to me behind Miss Raina's back; and she doing the same behind yours.

SERGIUS (*recoiling a step*): Louka!

LOUKA: It shows how little you really care.

SERGIUS (*dropping his familiarity and speaking with freezing politeness*): If our conversation is to continue, Louka, you will please remember that a gentleman does not discuss the conduct of the lady he is engaged to with her maid.

LOUKA: It's so hard to know what a gentleman considers right. I thought from your trying to kiss me that you had given up being so particular.

SERGIUS (*turning from her and striking his forehead as he comes back into the garden from the gateway*): Devil! devil!

LOUKA: Ha! ha! I expect one of the six of you is very like me, sir, though I am only Miss Raina's maid. (*She goes back to her work at the table, taking no further notice of him.*)

SERGIUS (*speaking to himself*): Which of the six is the real man? that's the question that torments me. One of them is a hero; another a buffoon, another a humbug, another perhaps a bit of a blackguard. (*He pauses, and looks furtively at* LOUKA *as he adds, with deep bitterness*) And one, at least, is a coward—jealous, like all cowards. (*He goes to the table*) Louka.

LOUKA: Yes?

SERGIUS: Who is my rival?

LOUKA: You shall never get that out of me, for love or money.

SERGIUS: Why?

LOUKA: Never mind why. Besides, you would tell that I told you, and I should lose my place.

SERGIUS (*holding out his right hand in affirmation*): No! on the honor of a—(*He checks himself; and his hand drops, nerveless, as he concludes sardonically*)—of a man capable of behaving as I have been behaving for the last five minutes. Who is he?

LOUKA: I don't know. I never saw him. I only heard his voice through the door of her room.

SERGIUS: Damnation! How dare you?

LOUKA (*retreating*): Oh, I mean no harm; you've no right to take up my words like that. The mistress knows all about it. And I tell you that if that gentleman ever comes here again, Miss Raina will marry him, whether he likes it or not. I know the difference between the sort of manner you and she put on before one another and the real manner.

(SERGIUS *shivers as if she had stabbed him. Then, setting his face like iron, he strides grimly to her and grips her above the elbows with both hands.*)

SERGIUS: Now you listen to me.

LOUKA (*wincing*): Not so tight; you're hurting me.

SERGIUS: That doesn't matter. You have stained my honor by making me a party to your eavesdropping. And you have betrayed your mistress.

LOUKA (*writhing*): Please—

SERGIUS: That shows that you are an abominable little clod of common clay, with the soul of a servant. (*He lets her go as if she were an unclean thing and turns away, dusting his hands of her, to the bench by the wall, where he sits down with averted head, meditating gloomily.*)

LOUKA (*whimpering angrily with her hands up her sleeves, feeling her bruised arms*): You know how to hurt with your tongue as well as with your hands. But I don't care, now I've found out that whatever clay I'm made of, you're made of the same. As for her, she's a

liar; and her fine airs are a cheat; and I'm worth six of her. (*She shakes the pain off hardily, tosses her head, and sets to work to put the things on the tray.*)

(*He looks doubtfully at her. She finishes packing the tray, and laps the cloth over the edges, so as to carry all out together. As she stoops to lift it, he rises.*)

SERGIUS: Louka! (*She stops and looks defiantly at him*) A gentleman has no right to hurt a woman under any circumstances. (*With profound humility, uncovering his head*) I beg your pardon.

LOUKA: That sort of apology may satisfy a lady. Of what use is it to a servant?

SERGIUS (*rudely crossed in his chivalry, throws it off with a bitter laugh, and says slightingly*): Oh, you wish to be paid for the hurt! (*He puts on his shako and takes some money from his pocket.*)

LOUKA (*her eyes filling with tears in spite of herself*): No, I want my hurt made well.

SERGIUS (*sobered by her tone*): How?

(*She rolls up her left sleeve, clasps her arm with the thumb and fingers of her right hand, and looks down at the bruise. Then she raises her head and looks straight at him. Finally, with a superb gesture, she presents her arm to be kissed. Amazed, he looks at her; at the arm; at her again; hesitates; and then, with shuddering intensity, exclaims* "Never!" *and gets away as far as possible from her.*)

(*Her arm drops. Without a word, and with unaffected dignity, she takes her tray and is approaching the house when* RAINA *returns, wearing a hat and jacket in the height of the Vienna fashion of the previous year, 1885.* LOUKA *makes way proudly for her and then goes into the house.*)

RAINA: I'm ready. What's the matter? (*Gaily*) Have you been flirting with Louka?

SERGIUS (*hastily*): No, no. How can you think such a thing?

RAINA (*ashamed of herself*): Forgive me, dear; it was only a jest. I am so happy today.

(*He goes quickly to her and kisses her hand remorsefully.* CATHERINE *comes out and calls to them from the top of the steps.*)

CATHERINE (*coming down to them*): I am sorry to disturb you, children, but Paul is distracted over those three regiments. He doesn't know how to send them to Philippopolis, and he objects to every suggestion of mine. You must go and help him, Sergius. He is in the library.

RAINA (*disappointed*): But we are just going out for a walk.

SERGIUS: I shall not be long. Wait for me just five minutes. (*He runs up the steps to the door.*)

RAINA (*following him to the foot of the steps and looking up at him with timid coquetry*): I shall go round and wait in full view of the library windows. Be sure you draw father's attention to me. If you are a moment longer than five minutes, I shall go in and fetch you, regiments or no regiments.

SERGIUS (*laughing*): Very well. (*He goes in.*)

(RAINA *watches him until he is out of her sight. Then, with a perceptible relaxation of manner, she begins to pace up and down the garden in a brown study.*)

CATHERINE: Imagine their meeting that Swiss and hearing the whole story! The very first thing your father asked for was the old coat we sent him off in. A nice mess you have got us into!

RAINA (*gazing thoughtfully at the gravel as she walks*): The little beast!

CATHERINE: Little beast! What little beast?

RAINA: To go and tell! Oh, if I had him here, I'd cram him with chocolate creams till he couldn't ever speak again!

CATHERINE: Don't talk such stuff. Tell me the truth, Raina. How long was he in your room before you came to me?

RAINA (*whisking round and recommencing her march in the opposite direction*): Oh, I forget.

CATHERINE: You cannot forget! Did he really climb up after the soldiers were gone; or was he there when that officer searched the room?

RAINA: No. Yes, I think he must have been there then.

CATHERINE: You think! Oh, Raina! Raina! Will anything ever make you straightforward? If Sergius finds out, it will be all over between you.

RAINA (*with cool impertinence*): Oh, I know Sergius is your pet. I sometimes wish you could marry him instead of me. You would just suit him. You would pet him, and spoil him, and mother him to perfection.

CATHERINE (*opening her eyes very widely indeed*): Well, upon my word!

RAINA (*capriciously, half to herself*): I always feel a longing to do or say something dreadful to him—to shock his propriety—to scandalize the five senses out of him. (*To* CATHERINE, *perversely*) I don't care whether he finds out about the chocolate cream soldier or not. I half hope he may. (*She again turns and strolls flippantly away up the path to the corner of the house.*)

CATHERINE: And what should I be able to say to your father, pray?

RAINA (*over her shoulder, from the top of the two steps*): Oh, poor father! As if he could help himself! (*She turns the corner and passes out of sight.*)

CATHERINE (*looking after her, her fingers itching*): Oh, if you were only ten years younger! (LOUKA *comes from the house with a salver, which she carries hanging down by her side*) Well?

LOUKA: There's a gentleman just called, madam. A Serbian officer.

CATHERINE (*flaming*): A Serb! And how dare he—(*checking herself bitterly*) Oh, I forgot. We are at peace now. I suppose we shall have them calling every day to pay their compliments. Well, if he is an officer why don't you tell your master? He is in the library with Major Saranoff. Why do you come to me?

LOUKA: But he asks for you, madam. And I don't think he knows who

you are; he said the lady of the house. He gave me this little ticket for you. (*She takes a card out of her bosom, puts it on the salver, and offers it to* CATHERINE.)

CATHERINE (*reading*): "Captain Bluntschli"? That's a German name.

LOUKA: Swiss, madam, I think.

CATHERINE (*with a bound that makes* LOUKA *jump back*): Swiss! What is he like?

LOUKA (*timidly*): He has a big carpet bag, madam.

CATHERINE: Oh Heavens! he's come to return the coat. Send him away; say we're not at home; ask him to leave his address and I'll write to him. Oh stop; that will never do. Wait! (*She throws herself into a chair to think it out.* LOUKA *waits*) The master and Major Saranoff are busy in the library, aren't they?

LOUKA: Yes, madam.

CATHERINE (*decisively*): Bring the gentleman out here at once. (*Peremptorily*) And be very polite to him. Don't delay. Here (*impatiently snatching the salver from her*), leave that here; and go straight back to him.

LOUKA: Yes, madam. (*Going.*)

CATHERINE: Louka!

LOUKA (*stopping*): Yes, madam.

CATHERINE: Is the library door shut?

LOUKA: I think so, madam.

CATHERINE: If not, shut it as you pass through.

LOUKA: Yes, madam. (*Going.*)

CATHERINE: Stop. (LOUKA *stops*) He will have to go that way (*indicating the gate of the stable yard*). Tell Nicola to bring his bag here after him. Don't forget.

LOUKA (*surprised*): His bag?

CATHERINE: Yes, here, as soon as possible. (*Vehemently*) Be quick! (LOUKA *runs into the house.* CATHERINE *snatches her apron off and throws it behind a bush. She then takes up the salver and uses it as a mirror, with the result that the handkerchief tied round her head follows the apron. A touch to her hair and a shake to her dressing gown make her presentable*) Oh, how? how? how can a man be such a fool! Such a moment to select! (LOUKA *appears at the door of the house, announcing* "Captain Bluntschli." *She stands aside at the top of the steps to let him pass before she goes in again. He is the man of the midnight adventure in* RAINA'S *room, clean, well brushed, smartly uniformed, and out of trouble, but still unmistakably the same man. The moment* LOUKA'S *back is turned,* CATHERINE *swoops on him with impetuous, urgent, coaxing appeal*) Captain Bluntschli, I am very glad to see you, but you must leave this house at once. (*He raises his eyebrows*) My husband has just returned with my future son-in-law, and they know nothing. If they did, the consequences would be terrible. You are a foreigner; you do not feel our national animosities as we do. We still hate the Serbs; the effect of the peace on my husband has been to make him feel like a lion baulked of his prey. If he discovers our secret, he will never forgive me; and my daughter's life will hardly be safe. Will you, like the chivalrous gentleman and soldier you are, leave at once before he finds you here?

BLUNTSCHLI (*disappointed, but philosophical*): At once, gracious lady. I only came to thank you and return the coat you lent me. If you will allow me to take it out of my bag and leave it with your servant as I pass out, I need detain you no further. (*He turns to go into the house.*)

CATHERINE (*catching him by the sleeve*): Oh, you must not think of going back that way. (*Coaxing him across to the stable gates*) This is the shortest way out. Many thanks. So glad to have been of service to you. Good-bye.

BLUNTSCHLI: But my bag?

CATHERINE: It shall be sent on. You will leave me your address.

BLUNTSCHLI: True. Allow me. (*He takes out his cardcase and stops to write his address, keeping* CATHERINE *in an agony of impatience. As he hands her the card,* PETKOFF, *hatless, rushes from the house in a fluster of hospitality, followed by* SERGIUS.)

PETKOFF (*as he hurries down the steps*): My dear Captain Bluntschli—

CATHERINE: Oh Heavens! (*She sinks on the seat against the wall.*)

PETKOFF (*too preoccupied to notice her as he shakes* BLUNTSCHLI'S *hand heartily*): Those stupid people of mine thought I was out here, instead of in the—haw!—library. (*He cannot mention the library without betraying how proud he is of it*) I saw you through the window. I was wondering why you didn't come in. Saranoff is with me; you remember him, don't you?

SERGIUS (*saluting humorously and then offering his hand with great charm of manner*): Welcome, our friend the enemy!

PETKOFF: No longer the enemy, happily. (*Rather anxiously*) I hope you've called as a friend and not about horses or prisoners.

CATHERINE: Oh, quite as a friend, Paul. I was just asking Captain Bluntschli to stay to lunch, but he declares he must go at once.

SERGIUS (*sardonically*): Impossible, Bluntschli. We want you here badly. We have to send on three cavalry regiments to Philippopolis, and we don't in the least know how to do it.

BLUNTSCHLI (*suddenly attentive and businesslike*): Philippopolis? The forage is the trouble, I suppose.

PETKOFF (*eagerly*): Yes, that's it. (*To* SERGIUS) He sees the whole thing at once.

BLUNTSCHLI: I think I can show you how to manage that.

SERGIUS: Invaluable man! Come along! (*Towering over* BLUNTSCHLI, *he puts his hand on his shoulder and takes him to the steps,* PETKOFF *following.*)

(RAINA *comes from the house as* BLUNTSCHLI *puts his foot on the first step.*)

RAINA: Oh! The chocolate cream soldier!

(BLUNTSCHLI *stands rigid.* SERGIUS, *amazed, looks at* RAINA, *then at* PETKOFF, *who looks back at him and then at his wife.*)

CATHERINE (*with commanding presence of mind*): My dear Raina, don't you see that we have a guest here? Captain Bluntschli, one of our new Serbian friends.

(RAINA *bows;* BLUNTSCHLI *bows.*)

RAINA: How silly of me! (*She comes down into the center of the group between* BLUNTSCHLI *and* PETKOFF) I made a beautiful ornament this morning for the ice pudding, and that stupid Nicola has just put down a pile of plates on it and spoilt it. (*To* BLUNTSCHLI, *winningly*) I hope you didn't think that you were the chocolate cream soldier, Captain Bluntschli.

BLUNTSCHLI (*laughing*): I assure you I did. (*Stealing a whimsical glance at her*) Your explanation was a relief.

PETKOFF (*suspiciously, to* RAINA): And since when, pray, have you taken to cooking?

CATHERINE: Oh, whilst you were away. It is her latest fancy.

PETKOFF (*testily*): And has Nicola taken to drinking? He used to be careful enough. First he shows Captain Bluntschli out here when he knew quite well I was in the library, and then he goes downstairs and breaks Raina's chocolate soldier. He must—(NICOLA *appears at the top of the steps with the bag. He descends, places it respectfully before* BLUNTSCHLI, *and waits for further orders. General amazement.* NICOLA, *unconscious of the effect he is producing, looks perfectly satisfied with himself. When* PETKOFF *recovers his power of speech, he breaks out at him with*) Are you mad, Nicola?

NICOLA (*taken aback*): Sir?

PETKOFF: What have you brought that for?

NICOLA: My lady's orders, Major. Louka told me that—

CATHERINE (*interrupting him*): My orders! Why should I order you to bring Captain Bluntschli's luggage out here? What are you thinking of, Nicola?

NICOLA (*after a moment's bewilderment, picking up the bag as he addresses* BLUNTSCHLI *with the very perfection of servile discretion*): I beg your pardon, Captain, I am sure. (*To* CATHERINE) My fault,

madame; I hope you'll overlook it. (*He bows and is going to the steps with the bag, when* PETKOFF *addresses him angrily.*)

PETKOFF: You'd better go and slam that bag, too, down on Miss Raina's ice pudding! (*This is too much for* NICOLA. *The bag drops from his hand almost on his master's toes, eliciting a roar of*) Begone, you butter-fingered donkey!

NICOLA (*snatching up the bag and escaping into the house*): Yes, Major.

CATHERINE: Oh, never mind. Paul, don't be angry.

PETKOFF (*blustering*): Scoundrel! He's got out of hand while I was away. I'll teach him. Infernal blackguard! The sack next Saturday! I'll clear out the whole establishment—(*He is stifled by the caresses of his wife and daughter, who hang round his neck, petting him.*)

CATHERINE
RAINA } (*together*):

Now, now, now, it mustn't be angry. Wow, wow, wow: not on your first
He meant no harm. Be good to please day at home. I'll make another ice pud-
me, dear. Sh-sh-sh-sh! ding. Tch-ch-ch!

PETKOFF (*yielding*): Oh well, never mind. Come, Bluntschli, let's have no more nonsense about going away. You know very well you're not going back to Switzerland yet. Until you do go back you'll stay with us.

RAINA: Oh, do, Captain Bluntschli.

PETKOFF (*to* CATHERINE): Now, Catherine, it's of you he's afraid. Press him and he'll stay.

CATHERINE: Of course I shall be only too delighted if (*appealingly*) Captain Bluntschli really wishes to stay. He knows my wishes.

BLUNTSCHLI (*in his driest military manner*): I am at madam's orders.

SERGIUS (*cordially*): That settles it!

PETKOFF (*heartily*): Of course!

RAINA: You see you must stay.

BLUNTSCHLI (*smiling*): Well, if I must, I must.

(*Gesture of despair from* CATHERINE.)

(*The Curtain Falls.*)

COMIC TECHNIQUES

Shaw utilizes comic techniques not only to suggest his disapproval of the sham of romantic idealism and bourgeois pretensions, but also to keep the audience's interest at a high pitch. On pages 35-37 the humorous dialogue between Petkoff and Catherine reveals their attempts to be modern and grand in the discussion of the bell, the library, washing, and military titles. This pretentiousness recalls Raina's family pride and Catherine's inevitable tea gowns, which were emphasized in Act One. Another comic technique used by Shaw is the entrance that backfires. Catherine holds out her hands after Sergius is formally announced, and Sergius, despite the fact that he feels awkward and unknightly, is forced to kiss both hands. How does Shaw achieve a similar comic effect with Raina's entrance?

Gestures, poses, and changes in tone of voice are other sources of amusement and likewise expose the preposterousness of romantic conduct. After his entrance Sergius poses consciously against the rail of the steps in his splendid uniform. In the love scene of mutual hero-worship between Raina and Sergius both strike awkward and operatic poses and speak in a stilted, high-flown style. Immediately after Raina leaves, Sergius changes his attitude and tone of voice and makes love to Louka in a most unchivalrous way. Raina, too, changes her tone of voice and mannerisms when she tells Catherine of her irritation with Sergius. These last two episodes produce a startling ironic shock because of their juxtaposition to the grandiloquent love scene.

CLIMAX

The climax of the play, and the finale of Act Two, is a carefully prepared series of minor comic shocks. Louka enters carrying a salver, but pulls Bluntschli's card from her bosom. Elaborate preparations are made to conceal Bluntschli's arrival while Catherine hurriedly primps up. Bluntschli is discovered by Petkoff and Sergius; Raina blurts out, "Oh! The chocolate cream soldier!" and Nicola provides a final bit of farce by nearly dropping the carpet bag on Petkoff's toes.

Despite the fact that Bluntschli remains off stage until the very end of this act, his presence is felt and his entrance is prepared for through the ironic story told by Petkoff and Sergius about the Swiss hidden by two women, through Raina's attitude, and through Louka's threat "that if that gentleman ever comes here again, Miss Raina will marry him, whether he likes it or not" (p. 46). When Bluntschli decides to remain, the climax of the play has been reached, for the audience now realizes that the engagements of Sergius and Raina and of Louka and Nicola will be short-lived. The remainder of the plot can be devoted only to rearranging the love pairs.

TONE

The varied comic effects proceeding from the use of character, dialogue, mugging, farce, irony, and situation in Act Two suggest Shaw's attitude toward romanticism, which is one manifestation of the new culture: it is a way of life to be ridiculed. Since Shaw concentrates more intensely on humor and shifts his attention from war to love, the tone of the play becomes lighter and more uproarious in this act. This increasing levity of tone is significant, as we shall see, in measuring the relative importance of the ideological content of the play.

QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the contributions of the set, costumes, and props of Act Two to the characterization and action.
2. Sergius offers the most rewarding study in Act Two of Shaw's use of theatrical devices to project a character who represents a point of view. Show how Sergius' unintegrated "six selves," produced by the cultural confusion, present a remarkable contrast to Bluntschli's integrated order and efficiency.
3. The two attitudes toward war which represented the major conflict in Act One are played down in this act. How does Shaw keep his audience aware of them while the love plot is receiving our central attention?

Act Three

IN THE *library after lunch. It is not much of a library. Its literary equipment consists of a single fixed shelf stocked with old paper-covered novels, broken backed, coffee-stained, torn and thumbed; and a couple of little hanging shelves with a few gift books on them; the rest of the wall space being occupied by trophies of war and the chase. But it is a most comfortable sitting room. A row of three large windows shows a mountain panorama, just now seen in one of its friendliest aspects in the mellowing afternoon light. In the corner next the right hand window a square earthenware stove, a perfect tower of glistening pottery, rises nearly to the ceiling and guarantees plenty of warmth. The ottoman is like that in* RAINA'S *room, and similarly placed; and the window seats are luxurious with decorated cushions. There is one object, however, hopelessly out of keeping with its surroundings. This is a small kitchen table, much the worse for wear, fitted as a writing table with an old canister full of pens, an eggcup filled with ink, and a deplorable scrap of heavily used pink blotting paper.*

At the side of this table, which stands to the left of anyone facing the window, BLUNTSCHLI *is hard at work with a couple of maps before him, writing orders. At the head of it sits* SERGIUS, *who is supposed to be also at work, but is actually gnawing the feather of a pen, and contemplating* BLUNTSCHLI'S *quick, sure, businesslike progress with a mixture of envious irritation at his own incapacity and awestruck wonder at an ability which seems to him almost miraculous, though its prosaic character forbids him to esteem it.* THE MAJOR *is comfortably established on the ottoman, with a newspaper in his hand and the tube of his hookah within easy reach.* CATHERINE *sits at the stove, with her back to them, embroidering.* RAINA, *reclining on the divan, is gazing in a daydream out at the Balkan landscape, with a neglected novel in her lap.*

The door is on the same side as the stove, farther from the window. The button of the electric bell is at the opposite side, behind BLUNTSCHLI.

PETKOFF (*looking up from his paper to watch how they are getting on at the table*): Are you sure I can't help in any way, Bluntschli?

BLUNTSCHLI (*without interrupting his writing or looking up*): Quite sure, thank you. Saranoff and I will manage it.

SERGIUS (*grimly*): Yes, we'll manage it. He finds out what to do; draws up the orders; and I sign 'em. Division of labor! (BLUNTSCHLI *passes him a paper*) Another one? Thank you. (*He plants the paper squarely before him, sets his chair carefully parallel to it, and signs with his cheek on his elbow and his protruded tongue following the movements of his pen*) This hand is more accustomed to the sword than to the pen.

PETKOFF: It's very good of you, Bluntschli; it is indeed, to let yourself be put upon in this way. Now are you quite sure I can do nothing?

CATHERINE (*in a low warning tone*): You can stop interrupting, Paul.

PETKOFF (*starting and looking round at her*): Eh? Oh! Quite right. (*He takes his newspaper up again, but presently lets it drop*) Ah, you haven't been campaigning, Catherine; you don't know how pleasant it is for us to sit here, after a good lunch, with nothing to do but enjoy ourselves. There's only one thing I want to make me thoroughly comfortable.

CATHERINE: What is that?

PETKOFF: My old coat. I'm not at home in this one; I feel as if I were on parade.

CATHERINE: My dear Paul, how absurd you are about that old coat! It must be hanging in the blue closet where you left it.

PETKOFF: My dear Catherine, I tell you I've looked there. Am I to believe my own eyes or not? (CATHERINE *rises and crosses the room to press the button of the electric bell*) What are you showing off that bell for? (*She looks at him majestically and silently resumes her chair and her needlework*) My dear, if you think the obstinacy of your sex can make a coat out of two old dressing gowns of Raina's, your waterproof, and my mackintosh, you're mistaken. That's exactly what the blue closet contains at present.

(NICOLA *presents himself.*)

CATHERINE: Nicola, go to the blue closet and bring your master's old coat here: the braided one he wears in the house.

NICOLA: Yes, madame. (*He goes out.*)

PETKOFF: Catherine.

CATHERINE: Yes, Paul.

PETKOFF: I bet you any piece of jewelry you like to order from Sofia against a week's housekeeping money that the coat isn't there.

CATHERINE: Done, Paul!

PETKOFF (*excited by the prospect of a gamble*): Come, here's an opportunity for some sport. Who'll bet on it? Bluntschli, I'll give you six to one.

BLUNTSCHLI (*imperturbably*): It would be robbing you, Major. Madame is sure to be right. (*Without looking up, he passes another batch of papers to* SERGIUS.)

SERGIUS (*also excited*): Bravo, Switzerland! Major, I bet my best charger against an Arab mare for Raina that Nicola finds the coat in the blue closet.

PETKOFF (*eagerly*): Your best char—

CATHERINE (*hastily interrupting him*): Don't be foolish, Paul. An Arabian mare will cost you 50,000 levas.

RAINA (*suddenly coming out of her picturesque revery*): Really, mother, if you are going to take the jewelry, I don't see why you should grudge me my Arab.

(NICOLA *comes back with the coat and brings it to* PETKOFF, *who can hardly believe his eyes.*)

CATHERINE: Where was it, Nicola?

NICOLA: Hanging in the blue closet, madame.

PETKOFF: Well, I am d—

CATHERINE (*stopping him*): Paul!

PETKOFF: I could have sworn it wasn't there. Age is beginning to tell on me. I'm getting hallucinations. (*To* NICOLA) Here, help me to change. Excuse me, Bluntschli. (*He begins changing coats,* NICOLA *acting as valet*) Remember, I didn't take that bet of yours, Sergius. You'd better give Raina that Arab steed yourself, since you've roused her expectations. Eh, Raina? (*He looks round at her, but she is again rapt in the landscape. With a little gush of parental affection and pride, he points her out to them, and says*) She's dreaming, as usual.

SERGIUS: Assuredly she shall not be the loser.

PETKOFF: So much the better for her. *I* shan't come off so cheaply, I expect. (*The change is now complete.* NICOLA *goes out with the discarded coat*) Ah, now I feel at home at last. (*He sits down and takes his newspaper with a grunt of relief.*)

BLUNTSCHLI (*to* SERGIUS, *handing a paper*): That's the last order.

PETKOFF (*jumping up*): What! Finished?

BLUNTSCHLI: Finished.

PETKOFF (*with childlike envy*): Haven't you anything for me to sign?

BLUNTSCHLI: Not necessary. His signature will do.

PETKOFF (*inflating his chest and thumping it*): Ah well, I think we've done a thundering good day's work. Can I do anything more?

BLUNTSCHLI: You had better both see the fellows that are to take these. (SERGIUS *rises*) Pack them off at once, and show them that I've marked on the orders the time they should hand them in by. Tell them that if they stop to drink or tell stories—if they're five minutes late, they'll have the skin taken off their backs.

SERGIUS (*stiffening indignantly*): I'll say so. (*He strides to the door*) And if one of them is man enough to spit in my face for insulting him, I'll buy his discharge and give him a pension. (*He goes out.*)

BLUNTSCHLI (*confidentially*): Just see that he talks to them properly, Major, will you?

PETKOFF (*officiously*): Quite right, Bluntschli, quite right. I'll see to it. (*He goes to the door importantly, but hesitates on the threshold*) By the bye, Catherine, you may as well come too. They'll be far more frightened of you than of me.

CATHERINE (*putting down her embroidery*): I daresay I had better. You would only splutter at them. (*She goes out,* PETKOFF *holding the door for her and following her.*)

BLUNTSCHLI: What an army! They make cannons out of cherry trees, and the officers send for their wives to keep discipline! (*He begins to fold and docket the papers.*)

(RAINA, *who has risen from the divan, marches slowly down the room with her hands clasped behind her and looks mischievously at him.*)

RAINA: You look ever so much nicer than when we last met. (*He looks up, surprised*) What have you done to yourself?

BLUNTSCHLI: Washed; brushed; good night's sleep and breakfast. That's all.

RAINA: Did you get back safely that morning?

BLUNTSCHLI: Quite, thanks.

RAINA: Were they angry with you for running away from Sergius's charge?

BLUNTSCHLI (*grinning*): No, they were glad because they'd all just run away themselves.

RAINA (*going to the table and leaning over it towards him*): It must have made a lovely story for them: all that about me and my room.

BLUNTSCHLI: Capital story. But I only told it to one of them, a particular friend.

RAINA: On whose discretion you could absolutely rely?

BLUNTSCHLI: Absolutely.

RAINA: Hm! He told it all to my father and Sergius the day you ex-

changed the prisoners. (*She turns away and strolls carelessly across to the other side of the room.*)

BLUNTSCHLI (*deeply concerned and half incredulous*): No! You don't mean that, do you?

RAINA (*turning, with sudden earnestness*): I do indeed. But they don't know that it was in this house you took refuge. If Sergius knew, he would challenge you and kill you in a duel.

BLUNTSCHLI: Bless me! then don't tell him.

RAINA: Please be serious, Captain Bluntschli. Can you not realize what it is to me to deceive him? I want to be quite perfect with Sergius—no meanness, no smallness, no deceit. My relation to him is the one really beautiful and noble part of my life. I hope you can understand that.

BLUNTSCHLI (*sceptically*): You mean that you wouldn't like him to find out that the story about the ice pudding was a—a—a—You know.

RAINA (*wincing*): Ah, don't talk of it in that flippant way. I lied; I know it. But I did it to save your life. He would have killed you. That was the second time I ever uttered a falsehood. (BLUNTSCHLI *rises quickly and looks doubtfully and somewhat severely at her*) Do you remember the first time?

BLUNTSCHLI: I! No. Was I present?

RAINA: Yes; and I told the officer who was searching for you that you were not present.

BLUNTSCHLI: True. I should have remembered it.

RAINA (*greatly encouraged*): Ah, it is natural that you should forget it first. It cost you nothing; it cost me a lie! A lie!

(*She sits down on the ottoman, looking straight before her with her hands clasped around her knee.* BLUNTSCHLI, *quite touched, goes to the ottoman with a particularly reassuring and considerate air, and sits down beside her.*)

BLUNTSCHLI: My dear young lady, don't let this worry you. Remember, I'm a soldier. Now what are the two things that happen to a soldier so often that he comes to think nothing of them? One is hearing people tell lies (RAINA *recoils*); the other is getting his life saved in all sorts of ways by all sorts of people.

RAINA (*rising in indignant protest*): And so he becomes a creature incapable of faith and of gratitude.

BLUNTSCHLI (*making a wry face*): Do you like gratitude? I don't. If pity is akin to love, gratitude is akin to the other thing.

RAINA: Gratitude! (*Turning on him*) If you are incapable of gratitude you are incapable of any noble sentiment. Even animals are grateful. Oh, I see now exactly what you think of me! You were not surprised to hear me lie. To you it was something I probably did every day! every hour! That is how men think of women. (*She paces the room tragically.*)

BLUNTSCHLI (*dubiously*): There's reason in everything. You said you'd told only two lies in your whole life. Dear young lady, isn't that rather a short allowance? I'm quite a straightforward man myself, but it wouldn't last me a whole morning.

RAINA (*staring haughtily at him*): Do you know, sir, that you are insulting me?

BLUNTSCHLI: I can't help it. When you strike that noble attitude and speak in that thrilling voice, I admire you; but I find it impossible to believe a single word you say.

RAINA (*superbly*): Captain Bluntschli!

BLUNTSCHLI (*unmoved*): Yes?

RAINA (*standing over him, as if she could not believe her senses*): Do you mean what you said just now? Do you know what you said just now?

BLUNTSCHLI: I do.

RAINA (*gasping*): I! I!!! (*She points to herself incredulously, mean-*

ing "I, Raina Petkoff tell lies!" He meets her gaze unflinchingly. She suddenly sits down beside him and adds, with a complete change of manner from the heroic to a babyish familiarity) How did you find me out?

BLUNTSCHLI (*promptly*): Instinct, dear young lady. Instinct, and experience of the world.

RAINA (*wonderingly*): Do you know, you are the first man I ever met who did not take me seriously?

BLUNTSCHLI: You mean, don't you, that I am the first man that has ever taken you quite seriously?

RAINA: Yes, I suppose I do mean that. (*Cosily, quite at her ease with him*) How strange it is to be talked to in such a way! You know, I've always gone on like that.

BLUNTSCHLI: You mean the—?

RAINA: I mean the noble attitude and the thrilling voice. (*They laugh together*) I did it when I was a tiny child to my nurse. She believed in it. I do it before my parents. They believe in it. I do it before Sergius. He believes in it.

BLUNTSCHLI: Yes, he's a little in that line himself, isn't he?

RAINA (*startled*): Oh! Do you think so?

BLUNTSCHLI: You know him better than I do.

RAINA: I wonder—I wonder is he? If I thought that—! (*Discouraged*) Ah, well, what does it matter? I suppose, now you've found me out, you despise me.

BLUNTSCHLI (*warmly, rising*): No, my dear young lady, no, no, no a thousand times. It's part of your youth, part of your charm. I'm like all the rest of them: the nurse, your parents, Sergius; I'm your infatuated admirer.

RAINA (*pleased*): Really?

BLUNTSCHLI (*slapping his breast smartly with his hand, German fashion*): Hand aufs Herz! Really and truly.

RAINA (*very happy*): But what did you think of me for giving you my portrait?

BLUNTSCHLI (*astonished*): Your portrait! You never gave me your portrait.

RAINA (*quickly*): Do you mean to say you never got it?

BLUNTSCHLI: No. (*He sits down beside her, with renewed interest, and says with some complacency*) When did you send it to me?

RAINA (*indignantly*): I did not send it to you. (*She turns her head away and adds, reluctantly*) It was in the pocket of that coat.

BLUNTSCHLI (*pursing his lips and rounding his eyes*): Oh-o-oh! I never found it. It must be there still.

RAINA (*springing up*): There still! for my father to find the first time he puts his hand in his pocket! Oh, how could you be so stupid?

BLUNTSCHLI (*rising also*): It doesn't matter: I suppose it's only a photograph; how can he tell who it was intended for? Tell him he put it there himself.

RAINA (*bitterly*): Yes, that is so clever! isn't it? (*Distractedly*) Oh! what shall I do?

BLUNTSCHLI: Ah, I see. You wrote something on it. That was rash.

RAINA (*vexed almost to tears*): Oh, to have done such a thing for you, who care no more—except to laugh at me—oh! Are you sure nobody has touched it?

BLUNTSCHLI: Well, I can't be quite sure. You see, I couldn't carry it about with me all the time; one can't take much luggage on active service.

RAINA: What did you do with it?

BLUNTSCHLI: When I got through to Pirot I had to put it in safe keeping somehow. I thought of the railway cloak room; but that's the surest place to get looted in modern warfare. So I pawned it.

RAINA: Pawned it!!!

BLUNTSCHLI: I know it doesn't sound nice; but it was much the safest plan. I redeemed it the day before yesterday. Heaven only knows whether the pawnbroker cleared out the pockets or not.

RAINA (*furious, throwing the words right into his face*): You have a low shopkeeping mind. You think of things that would never come into a gentleman's head.

BLUNTSCHLI (*phlegmatically*): That's the Swiss national character, dear lady. (*He returns to the table.*)

RAINA: Oh, I wish I had never met you. (*She flounces away and sits at the window fuming.*)

(LOUKA *comes in with a heap of letters and telegrams on her salver and crosses, with her bold free gait, to the table. Her left sleeve is looped up to the shoulder with a brooch, showing her naked arm, with a broad gilt bracelet covering the bruise.*

LOUKA (*to* BLUNTSCHLI): For you. (*She empties the salver with a fling on to the table*) The messenger is waiting. (*She is determined not to be civil to an enemy, even if she must bring him his letters.*)

BLUNTSCHLI (*to* RAINA): Will you excuse me; the last postal delivery that reached me was three weeks ago. These are the subsequent accumulations. Four telegrams—a week old. (*He opens one*) Oho! Bad news!

RAINA (*rising and advancing a little remorsefully*): Bad news?

BLUNTSCHLI: My father's dead. (*He looks at the telegram with his lips pursed, musing on the unexpected change in his arrangements.* LOUKA *crosses herself hastily.*)

RAINA: Oh, how very sad!

BLUNTSCHLI: Yes, I shall have to start for home in an hour. He has left a lot of big hotels behind him to be looked after. (*He takes up a fat letter in a long blue envelope*) Here's a whacking letter from the family solicitor. (*He pulls out the enclosures and glances them over*) Great Heavens! Seventy! Two hundred! (*In a crescendo of dismay*) Four hundred! Four thousand!! Nine thousand six hundred!!! What on earth am I to do with them all?

RAINA (*timidly*): Nine thousand hotels?

BLUNTSCHLI: Hotels! nonsense. If you only knew! Oh, it's too ridiculous! Excuse me, I must give my fellow orders about starting. (*He leaves the room hastily with the documents in his hand.*)

LOUKA (*knowing instinctively that she can annoy* RAINA *by disparaging* BLUNTSCHLI): He has not much heart, that Swiss. He has not a word of grief for his poor father.

RAINA (*bitterly*): Grief! A man who has been doing nothing but killing people for years! What does he care? What does any soldier care? (*She goes to the door, restraining her tears with difficulty.*)

LOUKA: Major Saranoff has been fighting too, and he has plenty of heart left. (RAINA, *at the door, draws herself up haughtily and goes out*) Aha! I thought you wouldn't get much feeling out of your soldier. (*She is following* RAINA *when* NICOLA *enters with an armful of logs for the stove.*)

NICOLA (*grinning amorously at her*): I've been trying all the afternoon to get a minute alone with you, my girl. (*His countenance changes as he notices her arm*) Why, what fashion is that of wearing your sleeve, child?

LOUKA (*proudly*): My own fashion.

NICOLA: Indeed! If the mistress catches you, she'll talk to you. (*He puts the logs down and seats himself comfortably on the ottoman.*)

LOUKA: Is that any reason why you should take it on yourself to talk to me?

NICOLA: Come! don't be so contrary with me. I've some good news for you. (*She sits down beside him. He takes out some paper money.* LOUKA, *with an eager gleam in her eyes, tries to snatch it; but he shifts it quickly to his left hand, out of her reach*) See! a twenty leva bill! Sergius gave me that, out of pure swagger. A fool and his money are soon parted. There's ten levas more. The Swiss gave me that for backing up the mistress' and Raina's lies about him. He's no fool, he isn't. You should have heard old Catherine downstairs as polite as you please to me, telling me not to mind the Major being a little impatient; for they knew what a good servant I was—after making a fool and a

liar of me before them all! The twenty will go to our savings, and you shall have the ten to spend if you'll only talk to me so as to remind me I'm a human being. I get tired of being a servant occasionally.

LOUKA: Yes, sell your manhood for 30 levas and buy me for 10! (*Rising scornfully*) Keep your money. You were born to be a servant. I was not. When you set up your shop you will only be everybody's servant instead of somebody's servant. (*She goes moodily to the table and seats herself regally in* SERGIUS'S *chair.*)

NICOLA (*picking up his logs and going to the stove*): Ah, wait till you see. We shall have our evenings to ourselves; and I shall be master in my own house, I promise you. (*He throws the logs down and kneels at the stove.*)

LOUKA: You shall never be master in mine.

NICOLA (*turning, still on his knees, and squatting down rather forlornly on his calves, daunted by her implacable disdain*): You have a great ambition in you, Louka. Remember, if any luck comes to you, it was I that made a woman of you.

LOUKA: You!

NICOLA (*scrambling up and going to her*): Yes, me. Who was it made you give up wearing a couple of pounds of false black hair on your head and reddening your lips and cheeks like any other Bulgarian girl! I did. Who taught you to trim your nails, and keep your hands clean, and be dainty about yourself, like a fine Russian lady! Me; do you hear that? me! (*She tosses her head defiantly; and he turns away, adding more coolly*) I've often thought that if Raina were out of the way, and you just a little less of a fool and Sergius just a little more of one, you might come to be one of my grandest customers, instead of only being my wife and costing me money.

LOUKA: I believe you would rather be my servant than my husband. You would make more out of me. Oh, I know that soul of yours.

NICOLA (*going closer to her for greater emphasis*): Never you mind my soul, but just listen to my advice. If you want to be a lady, your present behaviour to me won't do at all, unless when we're alone.

It's too sharp and impudent; and impudence is a sort of familiarity: it shows affection for me. And don't you try being high and mighty with me, either. You're like all country girls; you think it's genteel to treat a servant the way I treat a stableboy. That's only your ignorance, and don't you forget it. And don't be so ready to defy everybody. Act as if you expected to have your own way, not as if you expected to be ordered about. The way to get on as a lady is the same as the way to get on as a servant; you've got to know your place; that's the secret of it. And you may depend on me to know my place if you get promoted. Think it over, my girl. I'll stand by you; one servant should always stand by another.

LOUKA (*rising impatiently*): Oh, I must behave in my own way. You take all the courage out of me with your coldblooded wisdom. Go and put those logs in the fire; that's the sort of thing you understand.

(*Before* NICOLA *can retort,* SERGIUS *comes in. He checks himself a moment on seeing* LOUKA, *then goes to the stove.*)

SERGIUS (*to* NICOLA): I am not in the way of your work, I hope.

NICOLA (*in a smooth, elderly manner*): Oh no, sir, thank you kindly. I was only speaking to this foolish girl about her habit of running up here to the library whenever she gets a chance to look at the books. That's the worst of her education, sir; it gives her habits above her station. (*To* LOUKA) Make that table tidy, Louka, for the Major. (*He goes out sedately.*)

(LOUKA, *without looking at* SERGIUS, *pretends to arrange the papers on the table. He crosses slowly to her and studies the arrangement of her sleeve reflectively.*)

SERGIUS: Let me see; is there a mark there? (*He turns up the bracelet and sees the bruise made by his grasp. She stands motionless, not looking at him; fascinated, but on her guard*) Ffff! Does it hurt?

LOUKA: Yes.

SERGIUS: Shall I cure it?

LOUKA (*instantly withdrawing herself proudly, but still not looking at him*): No. You cannot cure it now.

SERGIUS (*masterfully*): Quite sure? (*He makes a movement as if to take her in his arms.*)

LOUKA: Don't trifle with me, please. An officer should not trifle with a servant.

SERGIUS (*indicating the bruise with a merciless stroke of his forefinger*): That was no trifle, Louka.

LOUKA (*flinching, then looking at him for the first time*): Are you sorry?

SERGIUS (*with measured emphasis, folding his arms*): I am never sorry.

LOUKA (*wistfully*): I wish I could believe a man could be as unlike a woman as that. I wonder, are you really a brave man?

SERGIUS (*unaffectedly, relaxing his attitude*): Yes, I am a brave man. My heart jumped like a woman's at the first shot, but in the charge I found that I was brave. Yes, that at least is real about me.

LOUKA: Did you find in the charge that the men whose fathers are poor like mine were any less brave than the men who are rich like you?

SERGIUS (*with bitter levity*): Not a bit. They all slashed and cursed and yelled like heroes. Psha! the courage to rage and kill is cheap. I have an English bull terrier who has as much of that sort of courage as the whole Bulgarian nation and the whole Russian nation at its back. But he lets my groom thrash him, all the same. That's your soldier all over! No, Louka, your poor men can cut throats; but they are afraid of their officers; they put up with insults and blows; they stand by and see one another punished like children, aye, and help to do it when they are ordered. And the officers!!! Well (*with a short harsh laugh*) *I* am an officer. Oh, (*fervently*) give me the man who will defy to the death any power on earth or in heaven that sets itself up against his own will and conscience; he alone is the brave man.

LOUKA: How easy it is to talk! Men never seem to me to grow up; they all have schoolboy's ideas. You don't know what true courage is.

SERGIUS (*ironically*): Indeed! I am willing to be instructed. (*He sits on the ottoman, sprawling magnificently.*)

LOUKA: Look at me! How much am I allowed to have my own will? I have to get your room ready for you, to sweep and dust, to fetch and carry. How could that degrade me if it did not degrade you to have it done for you? But (*with subdued passion*) if I were Empress of Russia, above everyone in the world, then!! Ah then, though according to you I could show no courage at all, you should see, you should see.

SERGIUS: What would you do, most noble Empress?

LOUKA: I would marry the man I loved, which no other queen in Europe has the courage to do. If I loved you, though you would be as far beneath me as I am beneath you, I would dare to be the equal of my inferior. Would you dare as much if you loved me? No, if you felt the beginnings of love for me you would not let it grow. You would not dare; you would marry a rich man's daughter because you would be afraid of what other people would say of you.

SERGIUS (*bounding up*): You lie; it is not so, by all the stars! If I loved you, and I were the Czar himself, I would set you on the throne by my side. You know that I love another woman, a woman as high above you as heaven is above earth. And you are jealous of her.

LOUKA: I have no reason to be. She will never marry you now. The man I told you of has come back. She will marry the Swiss.

SERGIUS (*recoiling*): The Swiss!

LOUKA: A man worth ten of you. Then you can come to me, and I will refuse you. You are not good enough for me. (*She turns to the door.*)

SERGIUS (*springing after her and catching her fiercely in his arms*): I will kill the Swiss, and afterwards I will do as I please with you.

LOUKA (*in his arms, passive and steadfast*): The Swiss will kill you, perhaps. He has beaten you in love. He may beat you in war.

SERGIUS (*tormentedly*): Do you think I believe that she—she! whose

worst thoughts are higher than your best ones, is capable of trifling with another man behind my back?

LOUKA: Do you think she would believe the Swiss if he told her now that I am in your arms?

SERGIUS (*releasing her in despair*): Damnation! Oh, damnation! Mockery! mockery everywhere! everything I think is mocked by everything I do. (*He strikes himself frantically on the breast*) Coward! liar! fool! Shall I kill myself like a man, or live and pretend to laugh at myself? (*She again turns to go*) Louka! (*She stops near the door*) Remember, you belong to me.

LOUKA (*turning*): What does that mean? An insult?

SERGIUS (*commandingly*): It means that you love me and that I have had you here in my arms and will perhaps have you there again. Whether that is an insult I neither know nor care; take it as you please. But (*vehemently*) I will not be a coward and a trifler. If I choose to love you, I dare marry you, in spite of all Bulgaria. If these hands ever touch you again, they shall touch my affianced bride.

LOUKA: We shall see whether you dare keep your word. And take care. I will not wait long.

SERGIUS (*again folding his arms and standing motionless in the middle of the room*): Yes, we shall see. And you shall wait my pleasure.

(BLUNTSCHLI, *much preoccupied, with his papers still in his hand, enters, leaving the door open for* LOUKA *to go out. He goes across to the table, glancing at her as he passes.* SERGIUS, *without altering his resolute attitude, watches him steadily.* LOUKA *goes out, leaving the door open.*)

BLUNTSCHLI (*absently, sitting at the table as before and putting down his papers*): That's a remarkable looking young woman.

SERGIUS (*gravely, without moving*): Captain Bluntschli.

BLUNTSCHLI: Eh?

SERGIUS: You have deceived me. You are my rival. I brook no rivals.

At six o'clock I shall be in the drilling-ground on the Klissoura road, alone, on horseback, with my sabre. Do you understand?

BLUNTSCHLI (*staring, but sitting quite at his ease*): Oh, thank you; that's a cavalry man's proposal. I'm in the artillery; and I have the choice of weapons. If I go, I shall take a machine gun. And there shall be no mistake about the cartridges this time.

SERGIUS (*flushing, but with deadly coldness*): Take care, sir. It is not our custom in Bulgaria to allow invitations of that kind to be trifled with.

BLUNTSCHLI (*warmly*): Pooh! don't talk to me about Bulgaria. You don't know what fighting is. But have it your own way. Bring your sabre along. I'll meet you.

SERGIUS (*fiercely delighted to find his opponent a man of spirit*): Well said, Switzer. Shall I lend you my best horse?

BLUNTSCHLI: No, damn your horse! thank you all the same, my dear fellow. (RAINA *comes in and hears the next sentence*) I shall fight you on foot. Horseback's too dangerous; I don't want to kill you if I can help it.

RAINA (*hurrying forward anxiously*): I have heard what Captain Bluntschli said, Sergius. You are going to fight. Why? (SERGIUS *turns away in silence and goes to the stove, where he stands watching her as she continues, to* BLUNTSCHLI) What about?

BLUNTSCHLI: I don't know; he hasn't told me. Better not interfere, dear young lady. No harm will be done; I've often acted as sword instructor. He won't be able to touch me; and I'll not hurt him. It will save explanations. In the morning I shall be off home; and you'll never see me or hear of me again. You and he will then make it up and live happily ever after.

RAINA (*turning away deeply hurt, almost with a sob in her voice*): I never said I wanted to see you again.

SERGIUS (*striding forward*): Ha! That is a confession.

RAINA (*haughtily*): What do you mean?

SERGIUS: You love that man!

RAINA (*scandalized*): Sergius!

SERGIUS: You allow him to make love to you behind my back, just as you treat me as your affianced husband behind his. Bluntschli, you knew our relations; and you deceived me. It is for that that I call you to account, not for having received favors *I* never enjoyed.

BLUNTSCHLI (*jumping up indignantly*): Stuff! Rubbish! I have received no favors. Why, the young lady doesn't even know whether I'm married or not.

RAINA (*forgetting herself*): Oh! (*Collapsing on the ottoman*) Are you?

SERGIUS: You see the young lady's concern, Captain Bluntschli. Denial is useless. You have enjoyed the privilege of being received in her own room, late at night—

BLUNTSCHLI (*interrupting him pepperily*): Yes, you blockhead! she received me with a pistol at her head. Your cavalry were at my heels. I'd have blown out her brains if she'd uttered a cry.

SERGIUS (*taken aback*): Bluntschli! Raina, is this true?

RAINA (*rising in wrathful majesty*): Oh, how dare you, how dare you?

BLUNTSCHLI: Apologize, man, apologize. (*He resumes his seat at the table.*)

SERGIUS: (*with the old measured emphasis, folding his arms*): I never apologize!

RAINA (*passionately*): This is the doing of that friend of yours, Captain Bluntschli. It is he who is spreading this horrible story about me. (*She walks about excitedly.*)

BLUNTSCHLI: No, he's dead. Burnt alive.

RAINA (*stopping, shocked*): Burnt alive!

BLUNTSCHLI: Shot in the hip in a woodyard. Couldn't drag himself out. Your fellows' shells set the timber on fire and burnt him, with half a dozen other poor devils in the same predicament.

RAINA: How horrible!

SERGIUS: And how ridiculous! Oh, war! war! the dream of patriots and heroes! A fraud, Bluntschli. A hollow sham, like love.

RAINA (*outraged*): Like love! You say that before me!

BLUNTSCHLI: Come, Saranoff, that matter is explained.

SERGIUS: A hollow sham, I say. Would you have come back here if nothing had passed between you except at the muzzle of your pistol? Raina is mistaken about your friend who was burnt. He was not my informant.

RAINA: Who then? (*Suddenly guessing the truth*) Ah, Louka! my maid! my servant! You were with her this morning all that time after—after—Oh, what sort of god is this I have been worshipping! (*He meets her gaze with sardonic enjoyment of her disenchantment. Angered all the more, she goes closer to him and says, in a lower, intenser tone*) Do you know that I looked out of the window as I went upstairs, to have another sight of my hero; and I saw something I did not understand then. I know now that you were making love to her.

SERGIUS (*with grim humor*): You saw that?

RAINA: Only too well. (*She turns away and throws herself on the divan under the center window, quite overcome.*)

SERGIUS (*cynically*): Raina, our romance is shattered. Life's a farce.

BLUNTSCHLI (*to* RAINA, *whimsically*): You see, he's found himself out now.

SERGIUS (*going to him*): Bluntschli, I have allowed you to call me a blockhead. You may now call me a coward as well. I refuse to fight you. Do you know why?

BLUNTSCHLI: No, but it doesn't matter. I didn't ask the reason when you cried on, and I don't ask the reason now that you cry off. I'm a professional soldier! I fight when I have to and am very glad to get out of it when I haven't to. You're only an amateur; you think fighting's an amusement.

SERGIUS (*sitting down at the table, nose to nose with him*): You shall hear the reason all the same, my professional. The reason is that it takes two men—real men—men of heart, blood and honor—to make a genuine combat. I could no more fight with you than I could make love to an ugly woman. You've no magnetism; you're not a man; you're a machine.

BLUNTSCHLI (*apologetically*): Quite true, quite true. I always was that sort of chap. I'm very sorry.

SERGIUS: Psha!

BLUNTSCHLI: But now that you've found that life isn't a farce, but something quite sensible and serious, what further obstacle is there to your happiness?

RAINA (*rising*): You are very solicitous about my happiness and his. Do you forget his new love—Louka? It is not you that he must fight now, but his rival, Nicola.

SERGIUS: Rival!! (*Bounding half across the room.*)

RAINA: Don't you know that they're engaged?

SERGIUS: Nicola! Are fresh abysses opening? Nicola!

RAINA (*sarcastically*): A shocking sacrifice, isn't it? Such beauty! such intellect! such modesty! wasted on a middle-aged servant man. Really, Sergius, you cannot stand by and allow such a thing. It would be unworthy of your chivalry.

SERGIUS (*losing all self-control*): Viper! Viper! (*He rushes to and fro, raging.*)

BLUNTSCHLI: Look here, Saranoff; you're getting the worst of this.

RAINA (*getting angrier*): Do you realize what he has done, Captain

Bluntschli? He has set this girl as a spy on us, and her reward is that he makes love to her.

SERGIUS: False! Monstrous!

RAINA: Monstrous! (*Confronting him*) Do you deny that she told you about Captain Bluntschli being in my room?

SERGIUS: No; but—

RAINA (*interrupting*): Do you deny that you were making love to her when she told you?

SERGIUS: No, but I tell you—

RAINA (*cutting him short contemptuously*): It is unnecessary to tell us anything more. That is quite enough for us. (*She turns away from him and sweeps majestically back to the window.*)

BLUNTSCHLI (*quietly, as* SERGIUS, *in an agony of mortification, sinks on the ottoman, clutching his averted head between his fists*): I told you you were getting the worst of it, Saranoff.

SERGIUS: Tiger cat!

RAINA (*running excitedly to* BLUNTSCHLI): You hear this man calling me names, Captain Bluntschli?

BLUNTSCHLI: What else can he do, dear lady? He must defend himself somehow. Come (*very persuasively*), don't quarrel. What good does it do?

(RAINA, *with a gasp, sits down on the ottoman and after a vain effort to look vexedly at* BLUNTSCHLI, *falls a victim to her sense of humor, and actually leans back babyishly against the writhing shoulder of* SERGIUS.)

SERGIUS: Engaged to Nicola! Ha! ha! Ah well, Bluntschli, you are right to take this huge imposture of a world coolly.

RAINA (*quaintly to* BLUNTSCHLI, *with an intuitive guess at his state of mind*): I daresay you think us a couple of grown-up babies, don't you?

SERGIUS (*grinning savagely*): He does, he does. Swiss civilization nursetending Bulgarian barbarism, eh?

BLUNTSCHLI (*blushing*): Not at all, I assure you. I'm only very glad to get you two quieted. There! there! let's be pleasant and talk it over in a friendly way. Where is this other young lady?

RAINA: Listening at the door, probably.

SERGIUS (*shivering as if a bullet had struck him and speaking with quiet but deep indignation*): I will prove that that, at least, is a calumny. (*He goes with dignity to the door and opens it. A yell of fury bursts from him as he looks out. He darts into the passage and returns dragging in* LOUKA, *whom he flings violently against the table, exclaiming*) Judge her, Bluntschli. You, the cool impartial man, judge the eavesdropper.

(LOUKA *stands her ground, proud and silent.*)

BLUNTSCHLI (*shaking his head*): I mustn't judge her. I once listened myself outside a tent when there was a mutiny brewing. It's all a question of the degree of provocation. My life was at stake.

LOUKA: My love was at stake. I am not ashamed.

RAINA (*contemptuously*): Your love! Your curiosity, you mean.

LOUKA (*facing her and returning her contempt with interest*): My love, stronger than anything you can feel, even for your chocolate cream soldier.

SERGIUS (*with quick suspicion, to* LOUKA): What does that mean?

LOUKA (*fiercely*): I mean—

SERGIUS (*interrupting her slightingly*): Oh, I remember, the ice pudding. A paltry taunt, girl!

(MAJOR PETKOFF *enters, in his shirtsleeves.*)

PETKOFF: Excuse my shirtsleeves, gentlemen. Raina, somebody has been wearing that coat of mine, I'll swear it. Somebody with a dif-

ferently shaped back. It's all burst open at the sleeve. Your mother is mending it. I wish she'd make haste; I shall catch cold. (*He looks more attentively at them*) Is anything the matter?

RAINA: No. (*She sits down at the stove with a tranquil air.*)

SERGIUS: Oh no. (*He sits down at the end of the table, as at first.*)

BLUNTSCHLI (*who is already seated*): Nothing. Nothing.

PETKOFF (*sitting down on the ottoman in his old place*): That's all right. (*He notices* LOUKA). Anything the matter, Louka?

LOUKA: No, sir.

PETKOFF (*genially*): That's all right. (*He sneezes*) Go and ask your mistress for my coat, like a good girl, will you?

(NICOLA *enters with the coat.* LOUKA *makes a pretence of having business in the room by taking the little table with the hookah away to the wall near the windows.*)

RAINA (*rising quickly as she sees the coat on* NICOLA's *arm*): Here it is, papa. Give it to me, Nicola; and do you put some more wood on the fire. (*She takes the coat and brings it to the* MAJOR, *who stands up to put it on.* NICOLA *attends to the fire.*)

PETKOFF (*to* RAINA, *teasing her affectionately*): Aha! Going to be very good to poor old papa just for one day after his return from the wars, eh?

RAINA (*with solemn reproach*): Ah, how can you say that to me, father?

PETKOFF: Well, well, only a joke, little one. Come, give me a kiss. (*She kisses him*) Now give me the coat.

RAINA: No, I am going to put it on for you. Turn your back. (*He turns his back and feels behind him with his arms for the sleeves. She dexterously takes the photograph from the pocket and throws it on the table before* BLUNTSCHLI, *who covers it with a sheet of paper under the very nose of* SERGIUS, *who looks on amazed, with*

his suspicions roused in the highest degree. She then helps PETKOFF *on with his coat*) There, dear! Now are you comfortable?

PETKOFF: Quite, little love. Thanks (*He sits down, and* RAINA *returns to her seat near the stove*) Oh, by the bye, I've found something funny. What's the meaning of this? (*He puts his hand into the picked pocket*) Eh? Hallo! (*He tries the other pocket*) Well, I could have sworn—! (*Much puzzled, he tries the breast pocket*) I wonder —(*Trying the original pocket*) Where can it—? (*He rises, exclaiming*) Your mother's taken it!

RAINA (*very red*): Taken what?

PETKOFF: Your photograph, with the inscription: "Raina, to her Chocolate Cream Soldier—a Souvenir." Now you know there's something more in this than meets the eye, and I'm going to find it out. (*Shouting*) Nicola!

NICOLA (*coming to him*): Sir!

PETKOFF: Did you spoil any pastry of Miss Raina's this morning?

NICOLA: You heard Miss Raina say that I did, sir.

PETKOFF: I know that, you idiot. Was it true?

NICOLA: I am sure Miss Raina is incapable of saying anything that is not true, sir.

PETKOFF: Are you? Then I'm not. (*Turning to the others*) Come, do you think I don't see it all? (*He goes to* SERGIUS *and slaps him on the shoulder*) Sergius, you're the chocolate cream soldier, aren't you?

SERGIUS (*starting up*): I! A chocolate cream soldier! Certainly not.

PETKOFF: Not! (*He looks at them. They are all very serious and very self-conscious*) Do you mean to tell me that Raina sends things like that to other men?

SERGIUS (*enigmatically*): The world is not such an innocent place as we used to think, Petkoff.

BLUNTSCHLI (*rising*): It's all right, Major. I'm the chocolate cream soldier. (PETKOFF *and* SERGIUS *are equally astonished*) The gracious

young lady saved my life by giving me chocolate creams when I was starving; shall I ever forget their flavour! My late friend Stolz told you the story of Pirot. I was the fugitive.

PETKOFF: You! (*He gasps*) Sergius, do you remember how those two women went on this morning when we mentioned it? (SERGIUS *smiles cynically*. PETKOFF *confronts* RAINA *severely*) You're a nice young woman, aren't you?

RAINA (*bitterly*): Major Saranoff has changed his mind. And when I wrote that on the photograph, I did not know that Captain Bluntschli was married.

BLUNTSCHLI (*startled into vehement protest*): I'm not married.

RAINA (*with deep reproach*): You said you were.

BLUNTSCHLI: I did not. I positively did not. I never was married in my life.

PETKOFF (*exasperated*): Raina, will you kindly inform me, if I am not asking too much, which of these gentlemen you are engaged to?

RAINA: To neither of them. This young lady (*introducing* LOUKA, *who faces them all proudly*) is the object of Major Saranoff's affections at present.

PETKOFF: Louka! Are you mad, Sergius? Why, this girl's engaged to Nicola.

NICOLA: I beg your pardon, sir. There is a mistake. Louka is not engaged to me.

PETKOFF: Not engaged to you, you scoundrel! Why, you had twenty-five levas from me on the day of your betrothal, and she had that gilt bracelet from Miss Raina.

NICOLA (*with cool unction*): We gave it out so, sir. But it was only to give Louka protection. She had a soul above her station, and I have been no more than her confidential servant. I intend, as you know, sir, to set up a shop later on in Sofia; and I look forward to her custom and recommendation should she marry into the nobility. (*He goes out with impressive discretion, leaving them all staring after him.*)

PETKOFF (*breaking the silence*): Well, I am—hm!

SERGIUS: This is either the finest heroism or the most crawling baseness. Which is it, Bluntschli?

BLUNTSCHLI: Never mind whether it's heroism or baseness. Nicola's the ablest man I've met in Bulgaria. I'll make him manager of a hotel if he can speak French and German.

LOUKA (*suddenly breaking out at* SERGIUS): I have been insulted by everyone here. You set them the example. You owe me an apology.

(SERGIUS, *like a repeating clock of which the spring has been touched, immediately begins to fold his arms.*)

BLUNTSCHLI (*before he can speak*): It's no use. He never apologizes.

LOUKA: Not to you, his equal and his enemy. To me, his poor servant, he will not refuse to apologize.

SERGIUS (*approvingly*): You are right. (*He bends his knee in his grandest manner*) Forgive me.

LOUKA: I forgive you. (*She timidly gives him her hand, which he kisses*). That touch makes me your affianced wife.

SERGIUS (*springing up*): Ah! I forgot that.

LOUKA (*coldly*): You can withdraw if you like.

SERGIUS: Withdraw! Never! You belong to me. (*He puts his arm about her.*)

(CATHERINE *comes in and finds* LOUKA *in* SERGIUS' *arms, with all the rest gazing at them in bewildered astonishment.*)

CATHERINE: What does this mean?

(SERGIUS *releases* LOUKA.)

PETKOFF: Well, my dear, it appears that Sergius is going to marry Louka instead of Raina. (*She is about to break out indignantly at*

him; he stops her by exclaiming testily) Don't blame me; I've nothing to do with it. (*He retreats to the stove.*)

CATHERINE: Marry Louka! Sergius, you are bound by your word to us!

SERGIUS (*folding his arms*): Nothing binds me.

BLUNTSCHLI (*much pleased by this piece of common sense*): Saranoff, your hand. My congratulations. These heroics of yours have their practical side after all. (*To* LOUKA) Gracious young lady, the best wishes of a good Republican! (*He kisses her hand, to* RAINA's *great disgust, and returns to his seat.*)

CATHERINE: Louka, you have been telling stories.

LOUKA: I have done Raina no harm.

CATHERINE (*haughtily*): Raina!

(RAINA, *equally indignant, almost snorts at the liberty.*)

LOUKA: I have a right to call her Raina, she calls me Louka. I told Major Saranoff she would never marry him if the Swiss gentleman came back.

BLUNTSCHLI (*rising, much surprised*): Hallo!

LOUKA (*turning to* RAINA): I thought you were fonder of him than of Sergius. You know best whether I was right.

BLUNTSCHLI: What nonsense! I assure you, my dear Major, my dear Madame, the gracious young lady simply saved my life, nothing else. She never cared two straws for me. Why, bless my heart and soul, look at the young lady and look at me. She, rich, young, beautiful, with her imagination full of fairy princes and noble natures and cavalry charges and goodness knows what! And I, a commonplace Swiss soldier who hardly knows what a decent life is after fifteen years of barracks and battles: a vagabond, a man who has spoiled all his chances in life through an incurably romantic disposition, a man—

SERGIUS (*starting as if a needle had pricked him and interrupting*

BLUNTSCHLI *in incredulous amazement*): Excuse me, Bluntschli, what did you say had spoiled your chances in life?

BLUNTSCHLI (*promptly*): An incurably romantic disposition. I ran away from home twice when I was a boy. I went into the army instead of into my father's business. I climbed the balcony of this house when a man of sense would have dived into the nearest cellar. I came sneaking back here to have another look at the young lady when any other man of my age would have sent the coat back—

PETKOFF: My coat!

BLUNTSCHLI: Yes, that's the coat I mean—would have sent it back and gone quietly home. Do you suppose I am the sort of fellow a young girl falls in love with? Why, look at our ages! I'm thirty-four: I don't suppose the young lady is much over seventeen. (*This estimate produces a marked sensation, all the rest turning and staring at one another. He proceeds innocently*) All that adventure which was life or death to me was only a schoolgirl's game to her—chocolate creams and hide and seek. Here's the proof! (*He takes the photograph from the table*) Now, I ask you, would a woman who took the affair seriously have sent me this and written on it "Raina, to her Chocolate Cream Soldier—a Souvenir"? (*He exhibits the photograph triumphantly, as if it settled the matter beyond all possibility of refutation.*)

PETKOFF: That's what I was looking for. How the deuce did it get there? (*He comes from the stove to look at it and sits down on the ottoman.*)

BLUNTSCHLI (*to* RAINA, *complacently*): I have put everything right, I hope, gracious young lady.

RAINA (*going to the table to face him*): I quite agree with your account of yourself. You are a romantic idiot. (BLUNTSCHLI *is unspeakably taken aback*) Next time, I hope you will know the difference between a schoolgirl of seventeen and a woman of twenty-three.

BLUNTSCHLI (*stupefied*): Twenty-three!

(RAINA *snaps the photograph contemptuously from his hand, tears it up, throws the pieces in his face, and sweeps back to her former place.*)

SERGIUS (*with grim enjoyment of his rival's discomfiture*): Bluntschli, my one last belief is gone. Your sagacity is a fraud, like everything else. You have less sense than even I!

BLUNTSCHLI (*overwhelmed*): Twenty-three! Twenty-three!! (*He considers*) Hm! (*Swiftly making up his mind and coming to his host*) In that case, Major Petkoff, I beg to propose formally to become a suitor for your daughter's hand, in place of Major Saranoff retired.

RAINA: You dare!

BLUNTSCHLI: If you were twenty-three when you said those things to me this afternoon, I shall take them seriously.

CATHERINE (*loftily polite*): I doubt, sir, whether you quite realize either my daughter's position or that of Major Sergius Saranoff, whose place you propose to take. The Petkoffs and the Saranoffs are known as the richest and most important families in the country. Our position is almost historical: we can go back for twenty years.

PETKOFF: Oh, never mind that, Catherine. (*To* BLUNTSCHLI) We should be most happy, Bluntschli, if it were only a question of your position; but hang it, you know, Raina is accustomed to a very comfortable establishment. Sergius keeps twenty horses.

BLUNTSCHLI: But who wants twenty horses? We're not going to keep a circus.

CATHERINE (*severely*): My daughter, sir, is accustomed to a first-rate stable.

RAINA: Hush, mother; you're making me ridiculous.

BLUNTSCHLI: Oh well, if it comes to a question of an establishment, here goes! (*He darts impetuously to the table, seizes the papers in the blue envelope, and turns to* SERGIUS) How many horses did you say?

SERGIUS: Twenty, noble Switzer.

BLUNTSCHLI: I have two hundred horses. (*They are amazed*) How many carriages?

SERGIUS: Three.

BLUNTSCHLI: I have seventy. Twenty-four of them will hold twelve inside, besides two on the box, without counting the driver and conductor. How many tablecloths have you?

SERGIUS: How the deuce do I know?

BLUNTSCHLI: Have you four thousand?

SERGIUS: No.

BLUNTSCHLI: I have. I have nine thousand six hundred pairs of sheets and blankets, with two thousand four hundred eiderdown quilts. I have ten thousand knives and forks, and the same quantity of dessert spoons. I have three hundred servants. I have six palatial establishments, besides two livery stables, a tea garden, and a private house. I have four medals for distinguished services; I have the rank of an officer and the standing of a gentleman; and I have three native languages. Show me any man in Bulgaria that can offer as much!

PETKOFF (*with childish awe*): Are you Emperor of Switzerland?

BLUNTSCHLI: My rank is the highest known in Switzerland: I am a free citizen.

CATHERINE: Then, Captain Bluntschli, since you are my daughter's choice—

RAINA (*mutinously*): He's not.

CATHERINE (*ignoring her*): I shall not stand in the way of her happiness. (PETKOFF *is about to speak*) That is Major Petkoff's feeling also.

PETKOFF: Oh, I shall be only too glad. Two hundred horses! Whew!

SERGIUS: What says the lady?

RAINA (*pretending to sulk*): The lady says that he can keep his tablecloths and his omnibuses. I am not here to be sold to the highest bidder. (*She turns her back on him.*)

BLUNTSCHLI: I won't take that answer. I appealed to you as a fugitive, a beggar, and a starving man. You accepted me. You gave me your hand to kiss, your bed to sleep in, and your roof to shelter me.

RAINA: I did not give them to the Emperor of Switzerland.

BLUNTSCHLI: That's just what I say. (*He catches her by the shoulders and turns her face-to-face with him*) Now tell us whom you did give them to.

RAINA (*succumbing with a shy smile*): To my chocolate cream soldier.

BLUNTSCHLI (*with a boyish laugh of delight*): That'll do. Thank you. (*He looks at his watch and suddenly becomes businesslike*) Time's up, Major. You've managed those regiments so well that you're sure to be asked to get rid of some of the infantry of the Timok division. Send them home by way of Lom Palanka. Saranoff, don't get married until I come back; I shall be here punctually at five in the evening on Tuesday fortnight. Gracious ladies (*his heels click*), good evening. (*He makes them a military bow and goes.*)

SERGIUS: What a man! Is he a man!

(*The Curtain Falls.*)

CHARACTERIZATION AND THEME

By the end of Act Two it is clear that in very general terms Shaw's over-all intention is to poke fun at the romantic or idealized concepts of warfare and love. The title of the play, taken from the first line of Vergil's *Aeneid,* ironically suggests the subject matter and, in part, the mock-epic tone. The theme of *Arms and the Man* is that romanticism is sham and pretense. Shaw dramatizes this theme by pitting realists against romantics — Bluntschli against Sergius, for example. By forcing the audience to laugh at the romantics, Shaw reveals his attitude.

A recent critic of Shaw has stated that the central technical device of Shaw's comedy is the dramatization of paradox. "A received moral opinion or social doctrine is embodied in a character who at first seems to the audience perfectly sensible, honorable, right-minded. To this person is opposed a character who embodies the Shavian contradiction of this conventional attitude. Their conflict — mostly verbal — is the central action of the play."[1] Demonstrate how the character-relationships in *Arms and the Man* seem to verify this observation.

In Act Three the conflict between romantics and realists is resolved with the romantics admitting that they have not been true to their real selves. Raina reveals to Bluntschli, who guesses at her immaturity, that she assumes "the noble attitude and the thrilling voice" as a game to impress her family and Sergius. Sergius too finally admits that war is "the dream of patriots and heroes! A fraud, Bluntschli. A hollow sham, like love" (p. 75). Bluntschli points out that Sergius has at last come to self-awareness: "You see: he's found himself out now" (p. 75). An attentive audience would have suspected that the attainment of such knowledge was only a matter of time for both Raina and Sergius. At what points earlier in the play has Shaw laid the groundwork for this resolution by hinting that their romanticism was only a facade?

But Shaw is not above pulling the rug out from under any neat resolution such as this, for even the character of Bluntschli, his realistic hero, is given a new twist in Act Three. Bluntschli explains that he is not an automaton but that on the contrary he has "an incurably romantic disposition," that he ran away when a boy, and that he returned Petkoff's coat in order to have another glimpse of Raina. She even calls him a "romantic idiot." But the practical, competent Bluntschli demonstrates his efficiency, in contrast to the helplessness of Petkoff and Sergius, by giving a final volley of orders as the curtain falls. The characters, then, are not two-dimensional embodiments of certain attitudes toward life, although Nicola perhaps comes closest to representing an abstract idea. He sacrifices his love for business and is allied with Bluntschli's point of view through the latter's offer of a position as a hotel manager. Sergius, however, like Louka, Raina, and Bluntschli, has many facets to his personality. He represents, not the true romantic, but the rather complicated personality of the romantic failure. Until late in the third act he serves, with his dramatic vows and challenge to a duel, as a constant but rather lame reminder of the romantic's point of view toward love and war.

[1] Alan R. Thompson, *The Dry Mock* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1948), pp. 112-113.

TONE

The comic tone of the play is broadened in the last act; for much of the time it borders on farce and burlesque. The techniques used here are similar to those in Act Two, but more emphasis is placed on such stage business as the fumbling with the photograph and Louka's eavesdropping. Much of the dialogue depends on gags for effects: for example, Catherine's comments while Bluntschli enumerates his possessions. Sergius is reduced to a caricature at times. The play ends in the same fashion as the stock musical comedy with its balanced pattern of character-relationships and the final frivolous tone.

Actually, through the first two acts Shaw has tricked his audience into believing that the intellectual issues in the play are of major importance. The broad comic tone and the modifications of character in the last act make it clear that Shaw is really more concerned with comedy than with moral conclusions. Shaw will ever sacrifice consistency of character (as when Nicola drops the carpet bag) for comic effects. Without a rather close reading of the stage directions and careful attention to stage business, one might believe *Arms and the Man* to be a serious tract on the dangers of romantic conduct rather than a tongue-in-cheek bit of fun on the part of Shaw. The intellectual concepts, then, are used as a foundation on which Shaw can build an entertaining piece of theater.

QUESTIONS

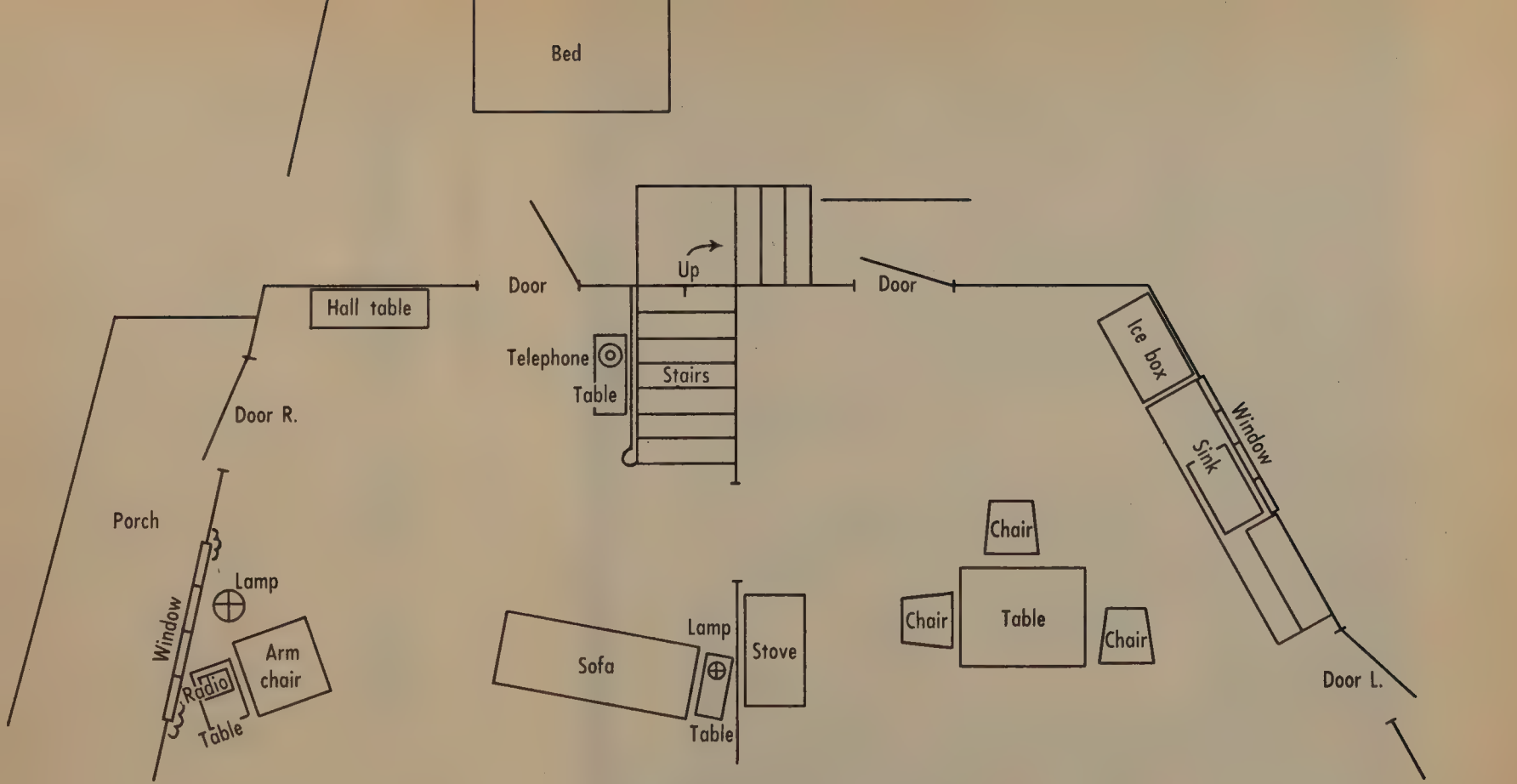
1. In what ways is the setting of Act Three similar to that of the first act?
2. Shaw's basic problem in the last act is to stimulate the audience's interest after an early climax. He succeeds in this by throwing in many new elements in rapid succession to block or slow up the final resolution of the plot. Discuss in this regard the effects Shaw achieves by (a) the props of Petkoff's coat and Raina's photograph; (b) Louka's bruise and the "touch" promise. What other devices does Shaw employ to create additional comic suspense?
3. Discuss how the subplot of the Nicola-Louka love affair represents still another variation on the clash of ideals in the play.
4. Louka is the most interesting of Shaw's minor characters in the play, a prototype of the famous Shavian designing woman. What characteristics make her role an appealing one? What is her contribution to the major theme of the play?
5. What are some of the traits of character that distinguish the romantics from the realists in *Arms and the Man*?
6. Shaw's mischievious wit makes broadside hits on subjects ranging

from the ethics of the servant class to the snobbery and affectation of the upper classes. Does there seem to be any spirit of reform underlying the Shavian comic sense? Cite evidence to substantiate your point of view.

7. To what extent does *Arms and the Man* dramatize Shaw's annoyance with the so-called idealists discussed in his preface to the play? Is there any difference between Shaw's tone in his introduction and in the play itself?

WILLIAM INGE

COME BACK, LITTLE SHEBA



COME BACK, LITTLE SHEBA

WILLIAM INGE

UNLIKE MOST of the playwrights represented in this volume, William Inge has only begun his career in the theater. When *Come Back, Little Sheba,* his first play to reach Broadway, opened in 1950, he was acclaimed by the critics as "Broadway's most promising new playwright." Inge was born in Independence, Kansas, on May 3, 1913. Earning his way through the University of Kansas during the depression years, he acted in summer theater sponsored by the Culver Military Academy. After his graduation in 1935 he went on a scholarship to the George Peabody College for Teachers at Nashville, Tennessee, where he received a master's degree in 1938.

Recognizing the hazards of a dramatic career in the thirties, Inge put aside his first love, acting, for a position teaching English and dramatics in the high school at Columbus, Kansas. In 1938 he was called to Stephens College, Columbia, Missouri, where the famous actress Maude Adams was chairman of the drama department. For a time during the war years he was also the drama editor of the St. Louis *Star-Times,* and from 1946 to 1949 he was an instructor in English at Washington University in St. Louis.

In 1947 Margo Jones produced his first play, *Farther Off from Heaven,* at her arena theater in Dallas. But it was not until the success of *Come Back, Little Sheba* that Inge's position in the dramatic world was established. This play won the George Jean Nathan and Theatre Time awards and has since been made into a motion picture, for her performance in which Shirley Booth, the brilliant star of both play and film, won an Academy Award in 1952. The next year Inge won new honors when his play *Picnic* received the Drama Critics' Circle Award and the Pulitzer Prize.

PLAYS

Farther Off from Heaven (1947)
Come Back, Little Sheba (1950)
Picnic (1953)
Bus Stop (1955)

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CHARACTERS

DOC
MARIE
LOLA
TURK
POSTMAN
MRS. COFFMAN
MILKMAN
MESSENGER
BRUCE
ED ANDERSON
ELMO HUSTON

The action takes place in a rundown neighborhood of a Midwestern city.

Come Back, Little Sheba was first produced at the Booth Theater, New York City, on February 15, 1950.

Act One

SCENE ONE

The stage is empty.

It is the downstairs of an old house in one of those semi-respectable neighborhoods in a Midwestern city. The stage is divided into two rooms, the living room at right and the kitchen at left, with a stairway and a door between. At the foot of the stairway is a small table with a telephone on it. The time is about 8:00 A.M., *a morning in the late spring.*

At rise of curtain the sun hasn't come out in full force and outside the atmosphere is a little gray. The house is extremely cluttered and even dirty. The living room somehow manages to convey the atmosphere of the twenties, decorated with cheap pretense at niceness and respectability. The general effect is one of fussy awkwardness. The furniture is all heavy and rounded-looking, the chairs and davenport being covered with a shiny mohair. The davenport is littered and there are lace antimacassars on all the chairs. In such areas, houses are so close together they hide each other from the sunlight. What sun could come through the window, at right, is dimmed by the smoky glass curtains. In the kitchen there is a table, center. On it are piled dirty dishes from supper the night before. Woodwork in the kitchen is dark and grimy. No industry whatsoever has been spent in making it one of those white, cheerful rooms that we commonly think kitchens should be. There is no action on stage for several seconds.

DOC *comes downstairs to kitchen. His coat is on back of chair, center. He straightens chair, takes roll from bag on drainboard, folds bag and tucks it behind sink. He lights stove and goes to table, fills dishpan there and takes it to sink. Turns on water, tucks towel in vest for apron. He goes to chair and says prayer. Then he crosses to stove, takes frying pan to sink and turns on water.*

MARIE, *a young girl of eighteen or nineteen who rooms in the house, comes out of her bedroom (next to the living room), skipping airily into the kitchen. Her hair is piled in curls on top of her*

head and she wears a sheer dainty negligee and smart, feathery mules on her feet. She has the cheerfulness only youth can feel in the morning.

MARIE (*goes to chair, opens pocketbook there*): Hi!

DOC: Well, well, how is our star boarder this morning?

MARIE: Fine.

DOC: Want your breakfast now?

MARIE: Just my fruit juice. I'll drink it while I dress and have my breakfast later.

DOC (*places two glasses on table*): Up a little early, aren't you?

MARIE: I have to get to the library and check out some books before anyone else gets them.

DOC: Yes, you want to study hard, Marie, learn to be a fine artist some day. Paint lots of beautiful pictures. I remember a picture my mother had over the mantelpiece at home, a picture of a cathedral in a sunset, one of those big cathedrals in Europe somewhere. Made you feel religious just to look at it.

MARIE: These books aren't for art, they're for biology. I have an exam.

DOC: Biology? Why do they make you take biology?

MARIE (*laughs*): It's required. Didn't you have to take biology when you were in college?

DOC: Well . . . yes, but I was preparing to study medicine, so of course I *had* to take biology and things like that. You see—I was going to be a real doctor then—only I left college my third year.

MARIE: What's the matter? Didn't you like the pre-med course?

DOC: Yes, of course . . . I had to give it up.

MARIE: Why?

DOC (*goes to stove with roll on plate—evasive*): I'll put your sweet roll in now, Marie, so it will be nice and warm for you when you want it.

MARIE: Dr. Delaney, you're so nice to your wife, and you're so nice to me, as a matter of fact, you're so nice to everyone. I hope my husband is as nice as you are. Most husbands would never think of getting their own breakfast.

DOC (*very pleased with this*): . . . uh . . . you might as well sit down now and . . . yes, sit here and I'll serve you your breakfast now, Marie, and we can eat it together, the two of us.

MARIE (*a light little laugh as she starts dancing away from him*): No, I like to bathe first and feel that I'm all fresh and clean to start the day. I'm going to hop into the tub now. See you later. (*She goes upstairs.*)

DOC (*the words appeal to him*): Yes, fresh and clean—(DOC *shows disappointment but goes on in businesslike way setting his breakfast on the table.*)

MARIE (*offstage*): Mrs. Delaney.

LOLA (*offstage*): 'Mornin', honey. (*Then* LOLA *comes downstairs. She is a contrast to* DOC'S *neat cleanliness, and* MARIE'S. *Over a nightdress she wears a lumpy kimono. Her eyes are dim with a morning expression of disillusionment, as though she had had a beautiful dream during the night and found on waking none of it was true. On her feet are worn dirty comfies.*)

LOLA (*with some self-pity*): I can't sleep late like I used to. It used to be I could sleep till noon if I wanted to, but I can't any more. I don't know why.

DOC: Habits change. Here's your fruit juice.

LOLA (*taking it*): I oughta be gettin' your breakfast, Doc, instead of you gettin' mine.

DOC: I have to get up anyway, Baby.

LOLA (*sadly*): I had another dream last night.

DOC (*pours coffee*): About Little Sheba?

LOLA (*with sudden animation*): It was just as real. I dreamt I put her on a leash and we walked downtown—to do some shopping. All the people on the street turned around to admire her, and I felt so proud. Then we started to walk, and the blocks started going by so fast that Little Sheba couldn't keep up with me. Suddenly, I looked around and Little Sheba was gone. Isn't that funny? I looked everywhere for her but I couldn't find her. And I stood there feeling sort of afraid. (*Pause*) Do you suppose that means anything?

DOC: Dreams are funny.

LOLA: Do you suppose it means Little Sheba is going to come back?

DOC: I don't know, Baby.

LOLA (*petulant*): I miss her so, Doc. She was such a cute little puppy. Wasn't she cute?

DOC (*smiles with the reminiscence*): Yes, she was cute.

LOLA: Remember how white and fluffy she used to be after I gave her a bath? And how her little hind-end wagged from side to side when she walked?

DOC (*an appealing memory*): I remember.

LOLA: She was such a cute little puppy. I hated to see her grow old, didn't you, Doc?

DOC: Yah. Little Sheba should have stayed young forever. Some things should never grow old. That's what it amounts to, I guess.

LOLA: She's been gone for such a long time. What do you suppose ever happened to her?

DOC: You can't ever tell.

LOLA (*with anxiety*): Do you suppose she got run over by a car? Or do you think that old Mrs. Coffman next door poisoned her? I wouldn't be a bit surprised.

DOC: No, Baby. She just disappeared. That's all we know.

LOLA (*redundantly*): Just vanished one day . . . vanished into thin air. (*As though in a dream.*)

DOC: I told you I'd find another one, Baby.

LOLA (*pessimistically*): You couldn't ever find another puppy as cute as Little Sheba.

DOC (*back to reality*): Want an egg?

LOLA: No, just this coffee. (*He pours coffee and sits down to breakfast,* LOLA, *suddenly*) Have you said your prayer, Doc?

DOC: Yes, Baby.

LOLA: And did you ask God to be with you—all through the day, and keep you strong?

DOC: Yes, Baby.

LOLA: Then God will be with you, Docky. He's been with you almost a year now and I'm so proud of you.

DOC (*preening himself a little*): Sometimes I feel sorta proud of myself.

LOLA: Say your prayer, Doc. I like to hear it.

DOC (*matter-of-factly*): God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom always to tell the difference.

LOLA: That's nice. That's so pretty. When I think of the way you used to drink, always getting into fights, we had so much trouble. I was so scared! I never knew what was going to happen.

DOC: That was a long time ago, Baby.

LOLA: I know it, Daddy. I know how you're going to be when you come home now. (*She kisses him lightly.*)

DOC: *I* don't know what I would have done without you.

LOLA: And now you've been sober almost a year.

DOC: Yep. A year next month. (*He rises and goes to the sink with coffee cup and two glasses, rinsing them.*)

LOLA: Do you have to go to the meeting tonight?

DOC: No. I can skip the meetings now for a while.

LOLA: Oh, good! Then you can take me to a movie.

DOC: Sorry, Baby. I'm going out on some Twelfth Step work with Ed Anderson.

LOLA: What's that?

DOC (*drying the glasses*): I showed you that list of twelve steps the Alcoholics Anonymous have to follow. This is the final one. After you learn to stay dry yourself, then you go out and help other guys that need it.

LOLA: Oh!

DOC (*goes to sink*): When we help others, we help ourselves.

LOLA: I know what you mean. Whenever I help Marie in some way, it makes me feel good.

DOC: Yah. (LOLA *takes her cup to* DOC *and he washes it*) Yes, but this is a lot different, Baby. When I go out to help some poor drunk, I have to give him courage—to stay sober like I've stayed sober. Most alcoholics are disappointed men . . . They need courage. . . .

LOLA: You weren't ever disappointed, were you, Daddy?

DOC (*after another evasive pause*): The important thing is to forget the past and live for the present. And stay sober doing it.

LOLA: Who do you have to help tonight?

DOC: Some guy they picked up on Skid Row last night. (*Gets his coat from back of chair*) They got him at the City Hospital. I kinda dread it.

LOLA: I thought you said it helped you.

DOC (*puts on coat*): It does, if you can stand it. I did some Twelfth Step work down there once before. They put alcoholics right in with the crazy people. It's horrible—these men all twisted and shaking—eyes all foggy and full of pain. Some guy there with his fists clamped together, so he couldn't kill anyone. There was a young man, just a *young* man, had scratched his eyes out.

LOLA (*cringing*): Don't, Daddy. Seems a shame to take a man there just 'cause he got drunk.

DOC: Well, they'll sober a man up. That's the important thing. Let's not talk about it any more.

LOLA (*with relief*): Rita Hayworth's on tonight, out at the Plaza. Don't you want to see it?

DOC: Maybe Marie will go with you.

LOLA: Oh, no. She's probably going out with Turk tonight.

DOC: She's too nice a girl to be going out with a guy like Turk.

LOLA: I don't know why, Daddy. Turk's nice. (*Cuts coffee cake.*)

DOC: A guy like that doesn't have any respect for *nice* young girls. You can tell that by looking at him.

LOLA: I never saw Marie object to any of the lovemaking.

DOC: A big, brawny bozo like Turk, he probably forces her to kiss him.

LOLA: Daddy, that's not so at all. I came in the back way once when they were in the living room, and she was kissing him like he was Rudolph Valentino.

DOC (*an angry denial*): Marie is a nice girl.

LOLA: I know she's nice. I just said she and Turk were doing some tall spooning. It wouldn't surprise me any if. . . .

DOC: Honey, I don't want to hear any more about it.

LOLA: You try to make out like every young girl is Jennifer Jones in the *Song of Bernadette.*

DOC: I do not. I just like to believe that young people like her are clean and decent . . . . (MARIE *comes downstairs.*)

MARIE: Hi! (*Gets cup and saucer from drainboard.*)

LOLA (*at stove*): There's an extra sweet roll for you this morning, honey. I didn't want mine.

MARIE: One's plenty, thank you.

DOC: How soon do you leave this morning? (LOLA *brings coffee.*)

MARIE (*eating*): As soon as I finish my breakfast.

DOC: Well, I'll wait and we can walk to the corner together.

MARIE: Oh, I'm sorry, Doc. Turk's coming by. He has to go to the library, too.

DOC: Oh, well, I'm not going to be competition with a football player. (*To* LOLA) It's a nice spring morning. Wanta walk to the office with me?

LOLA: I look too terrible, Daddy. I ain't even dressed.

DOC: Kiss Daddy good-bye.

LOLA (*gets up and kisses him softly*): Bye, bye, Daddy. If you get hungry, come home and I'll have something for you.

MARIE (*joking*): Aren't you going to kiss *me*, Dr. Delaney? (LOLA *eggs* DOC *to go ahead.*)

DOC (*startled, hesitates, forces himself to realize she is only joking and manages to answer*): Can't spend my time kissing all the girls.

(MARIE *laughs.* DOC *goes into living room while* LOLA *and* MARIE *continue talking.* MARIE'S *scarf is tossed over his hat on chair, so he picks it up, then looks at it fondly, holding it in the air inspecting its delicate gracefulness. He drops it back on chair and goes out.*)

MARIE: I think Dr. Delaney is so nice.

LOLA (*she is by the closet now, where she keeps a few personal articles. She is getting into a more becoming smock*): When did you say Turk was coming by?

MARIE: Said he'd be here about 9:30. (DOC *exits, hearing the line about* TURK) That's a pretty smock.

LOLA (*goes to table, sits in chair and changes shoes*): It'll be better to work around the house in.

MARIE (*not sounding exactly cheerful*): Mrs. Delaney, I'm expecting a telegram this morning. Would you leave it on my dresser for me when it comes?

LOLA: Sure, honey. No bad news, I hope.

MARIE: Oh, no! It's from Bruce.

LOLA (MARIE'S *boy friends are one of her liveliest interests*): Oh, your boy friend in Cincinnati. Is he coming to see you?

MARIE: I guess so.

LOLA: I'm just dying to meet him.

MARIE (*changing the subject*): Really, Mrs. Delaney, you and Doc have been so nice to me. I just want you to know I appreciate it.

LOLA: Thanks, honey.

MARIE: You've been like a father and mother to me. I appreciate it.

LOLA: Thanks, honey.

MARIE: Turk was saying just the other night what good sports you both are.

LOLA (*brushing hair*): That so?

MARIE: Honest. He said it was just as much fun being with you as with kids our own age.

LOLA (*couldn't be more flattered*): Oh, I like that Turk. He reminds me of a boy I used to know in high school, Dutch McCoy. Where did you ever meet him?

MARIE: In art class.

LOLA: Turk take art?

MARIE (*laughs*): No. It was in a life class. He was modeling. Lots of the athletes do that. It pays them a dollar an hour.

LOLA: That's nice.

MARIE: Mrs. Delaney? I've got some corrections to make in some of my drawings. Is it all right if I bring Turk home this morning to pose for me? It'll just take a few minutes.

LOLA: Sure, honey.

MARIE: There's a contest on now. They're giving a prize for the best drawing to use for advertising the Spring Relays.

LOLA: And you're going to do a picture of Turk? That's nice. (*A sudden thought*) Doc's gonna be gone tonight. You and Turk can have the living room if you want to. (*A little secretively.*)

MARIE (*this is a temptation*): O.K. Thanks. (*Exits to bedroom.*)

LOLA: Tell me more about Bruce. (*Follows her to bedroom door.*)

MARIE (*offstage in bedroom. Remembering her affinity*): Well, he comes from one of the best families in Cincinnati. And they have a great big house. And they have a maid, too. And he's got a wonderful personality. He makes $300 a month.

LOLA: That so?

MARIE: And he stays at the best hotels. His company insists on it. (*Enters.*)

LOLA: Do you like him as well as Turk? (*Buttoning up back of* MARIE'S *blouse.*)

MARIE (*evasive*): Bruce is so dependable, and . . . he's a gentleman, too.

LOLA: Are you goin' to marry him, honey?

MARIE: Maybe, after I graduate from college and he feels he can support a wife and children. I'm going to have lots and lots of children.

LOLA: I wanted children, too. When I lost my baby and found out I couldn't have any more, I didn't know what to do with myself. I wanted to get a job, but Doc wouldn't hear of it.

MARIE: Bruce is going to come into a lot of money some day. His uncle made a fortune in men's garters. (*Exits into her room.*)

LOLA (*leaning on door frame*): Doc was a rich boy when I married him. His mother left him $25,000 when she died. (*Disillusioned*) It took him a lot to get his office started and everything . . . then, he got sick. (*She makes a futile gesture; then on the bright side*) But Doc's always good to me . . . *now.*

MARIE (*re-enters*): Oh, Doc's a peach.

LOLA: I used to be pretty, something like you. (*She gets her picture from table*) I was Beauty Queen of the senior class in high school. My dad was awful strict, though. Once he caught me holding hands with that good-looking Dutch McCoy. Dad sent Dutch home, and wouldn't let me go out after supper for a whole month. Daddy would never let me go out with boys much. Just because I was pretty. He was afraid all the boys would get the wrong idea—*you* know. I never had any fun at all until I met Doc.

MARIE: Sometimes I'm glad I didn't know my father. Mom always let me do pretty much as I please.

LOLA: Doc was the first boy Dad ever let me go out with. We got married that spring. (*Replaces picture.* MARIE *sits on couch, puts on shoes and socks.*)

MARIE: What did your father think of that?

LOLA: We came right to the city then. And, well, Doc gave up his

pre-med course and went to Chiropractor School instead.

MARIE: You must have been married awful young.

LOLA: Oh, yes. Eighteen.

MARIE: That must have made your father really mad.

LOLA: Yes, it did. I never went home after that, but my mother comes down here from Green Valley to visit me sometimes.

TURK (*bursts into the front room from outside. He is a young, big, husky, good-looking boy, nineteen or twenty. He has the openness, the generosity, vigor and health of youth. He's had a little time in the service, but he is not what one would call disciplined. He wears faded dungarees and a T-shirt. He always enters unannounced. He hollers for* MARIE): Hey, Marie! Ready?

MARIE (*calling. Runs and exits into bedroom, closing door*): Just a minute, Turk.

LOLA (*confidentially*): I'll entertain him until you're ready. (*She is by nature coy and kittenish with any attractive man. Picks up papers —stuffs them under table*) The house is such a mess, Turk! I bet you think I'm an awful housekeeper. Some day I'll surprise you. But you're like one of the family now. (*Pause*) My, you're an early caller.

TURK: Gotta get to the library. Haven't cracked a book for a biology exam and Marie's gotta help me.

LOLA (*unconsciously admiring his stature and physique and looking him over*): My, I'd think you'd be chilly running around in just that thin little shirt.

TURK: Me? I go like this in the middle of winter.

LOLA: Well, you're a big husky man.

TURK (*laughs*): Oh, I'm a brute, *I* am.

LOLA: You should be out in Hollywood making those Tarzan movies.

TURK: I had enough of that place when I was in the Navy.

LOLA: That so?

TURK (*calling*): Hey, Marie, hurry up.

MARIE: Oh, be patient, Turk.

TURK (*to* LOLA): She doesn't realize how busy I am. I'll only have a half hour to study at most. I gotta report to the coach at 10:30.

LOLA: What are you in training for now?

TURK: Spring track. They got me throwing the javelin.

LOLA: The javelin? What's that?

TURK (*laughs at her ignorance*): It's a big, long lance. (*Assumes the magnificent position*) You hold it like this, erect—then you let go and it goes singing through the air, and lands yards away, if you're any good at it, and sticks in the ground, quivering like an arrow. I won the State championship last year.

LOLA (*she has watched as though fascinated*): My!

TURK (*very generous*): Get Marie to take you to the track field some afternoon, and you can watch me.

LOLA: That would be thrilling.

MARIE (*comes dancing in*): Hi, Turk.

TURK: Hi, juicy.

LOLA (*as the young couple moves to the doorway*): Remember, Marie, you and Turk can have the front room tonight. All to yourselves. You can play the radio and dance and make a plate of fudge, or anything you want.

MARIE (*to* TURK): O.K.?

TURK (*with eagerness*): Sure.

MARIE: Let's go. (*Exits.*)

LOLA: 'Bye, kids.

TURK: 'Bye, Mrs. Delaney. (*Gives her a chuck under the chin*) You're a swell skirt.

(LOLA *couldn't be more flattered. For a moment she is breathless. They speed out the door and* LOLA *stands, sadly watching them depart. Then a sad, vacant look comes over her face. Her arms drop in a gesture of futility. Slowly she walks out on the front porch and calls.*)

LOLA: Little Sheba! Come, Little She-ba. Come back . . . come back, Little Sheba! (*She waits for a few moments, then comes wearily back into the house, closing the door behind her. Now the morning has caught up with her. She goes to the kitchen, kicks off her pumps and gets back into comfies. The sight of the dishes on the drainboard depresses her. Clearly she is bored to death. Then the telephone rings with the promise of relieving her. She answers it*) Hello—Oh, no, you've got the wrong number—Oh, that's all right. (*Again it looks hopeless. She hears the postman. Now her spirits are lifted. She runs to the door, opens it and awaits him. When he's within distance, she lets loose a barrage of welcome*) 'Morning, Mr. Postman.

POSTMAN: 'Morning, ma'am.

LOLA: You better have something for me today. Sometimes I think you don't even know I live here. You haven't left me anything for two whole weeks. If you can't do better than that, I'll just have to get a new postman.

POSTMAN (*on the porch*): You'll have to get someone to write you some letters, lady. Nope, nothing for you.

LOLA: Well, I was only joking. You knew I was joking, didn't you? I bet you're thirsty. You come right in here and I'll bring you a glass of cold water. Come in and sit down for a few minutes and rest your feet awhile.

POSTMAN: I'll take you up on that, lady. I've worked up quite a thirst. (*Coming in.*)

LOLA: You sit down. I'll be back in just a minute. (*Goes to kitchen, gets pitcher out of refrigerator and brings it back.*)

POSTMAN: Spring is turnin' into summer awful soon.

LOLA: You feel free to stop here and ask me for a drink of water any time you want to. (*Pouring drink*) That's what we're all here for, isn't it? To make each other comfortable?

POSTMAN: Thank you, ma'am.

LOLA (*clinging, not wanting to be left alone so soon; she hurries her conversation to hold him*): You haven't been our postman very long, have you?

POSTMAN (*she pours him a glass of water, stands holding pitcher as he drinks*): No.

LOLA: You postmen have things pretty nice, don't you? I hear you get nice pensions after you been working for the government twenty years. I think that's dandy. It's a *good* job, too. (*Pours him a second glass*) You may get tired but I think it's good for a man to be outside and get a lot of exercise. Keeps him strong and healthy. My husband, he's a doctor, a *chiro*practor; he has to stay inside his office all day long. The only exercise he gets is rubbin' peoples' backbones. (*They laugh.* LOLA *goes to table, leaves pitcher*) It makes his hands strong. He's got the strongest hands you ever did see. But he's got a poor digestion. I keep tellin' him he oughta get some fresh air once in a while and some exercise. (POSTMAN *rises as if to go, and this hurries her into a more absorbing monologue*) You know what? My husband is an Alcoholics Anonymous. He doesn't care if I tell you that 'cause he's proud of it. He hasn't touched a drop in almost a year. All that time we've had a quart of whiskey in the pantry for company and he hasn't even gone near it. Doesn't even want to. You know, alcoholics can't drink like ordinary people; they're *allergic* to it. It affects them different. They get started drinking and can't stop. Liquor transforms them. Sometimes they get mean and violent and wanna fight, but if they let liquor alone, they're perfectly all right, just like you and me. (POSTMAN *tries to leave*) You should have seen Doc before he gave it up. He lost all his patients, wouldn't even go to the office; just wanted to stay drunk all day long and he'd come home at night and. . . . You just wouldn't believe it if you saw him now. He's got his patients all back, and he's just doing fine.

POSTMAN: Sure, I know Dr. Delaney. I deliver his office mail. He's a fine man.

LOLA: Oh, thanks. You don't ever drink, do you?

POSTMAN: Oh, a few beers once in a while. (*He is ready to go.*)

LOLA: Well, I guess that stuff doesn't do any of us any good.

POSTMAN: No. (*Crosses down for mail on floor center*) Well, good day, ma'am.

LOLA: Say, you got any kids?

POSTMAN: Three grandchildren.

LOLA (*getting it from console table*): We don't have any kids, and we got this toy in a box of breakfast food. Why don't you take it home to them?

POSTMAN: Why, that's very kind of you, ma'am. (*He takes it, and goes.*)

LOLA: Good-bye, Mr. Postman.

POSTMAN (*on porch*): I'll see that you get a letter, if I have to write it myself.

LOLA: Thanks. Good-bye. (*Left alone, she turns on radio. Then she goes to kitchen to start dishes, showing her boredom in the half-hearted way she washes them. Takes water back to icebox. Then she spies* MRS. COFFMAN *hanging baby clothes on lines just outside kitchen door. Goes to door*) My, you're a busy woman this morning, Mrs. Coffman.

MRS. COFFMAN (*German accent. She is outside, but sticks her head in for some of the following*): Being busy is being happy.

LOLA: I guess so.

MRS. COFFMAN: I don't have it as easy as you. When you got seven kids to look after, you got no time to sit around the house, Mrs. Delaney.

LOLA: I s'pose not.

MRS. COFFMAN: But you don't hear me complain.

LOLA: Oh, no. You never complain. (*Pause*) I guess my little doggie's gone for good, Mrs. Coffman. I sure miss her.

MRS. COFFMAN: The only way to keep from missing one dog is to get another.

LOLA (*goes to sink, turns off water*): Oh, I never could find another doggie as cute as Little Sheba.

MRS. COFFMAN: Did you put an ad in the paper?

LOLA: For two whole weeks. No one answered it. It's just like she vanished—into thin air. (*She likes this metaphor*) Every day, though, I go out on the porch and call her. You can't tell; she might be around. Don't you think?

MRS. COFFMAN: You should get busy and forget her. You should get busy, Mrs. Delaney.

LOLA: Yes, I'm going to. I'm going to start my spring house-cleaning one of these days real soon. Why don't you come in and have a cup of coffee with me, Mrs. Coffman, and we can chat awhile?

MRS. COFFMAN: I got work to do, Mrs. Delaney. I got work. (*Exit.*)

(LOLA *turns from the window, annoyed at her rejection. Is about to start in on the dishes when the milkman arrives. She opens the back door and detains him.*)

MILKMAN: 'Morning, Mrs. Coffman.

MRS. COFFMAN: 'Morning.

LOLA: Hello there, Mr. Milkman. How are you today?

MILKMAN: 'Morning, Lady.

LOLA: I think I'm going to want a few specials today. Can you come in a minute? (*Goes to icebox.*)

MILKMAN (*coming in*): What'll it be? (*He probably is used to her. He is not a handsome man but is husky and attractive in his uniform.*)

LOLA (*at refrigerator*): Well, now, let's see. You got any cottage cheese?

MILKMAN: We always got cottage cheese, Lady. (*Showing her card*) All you gotta do is check the items on the card and we leave 'em. Now I gotta go back to the truck.

LOLA: Now, don't scold me. I always mean to do that but you're always here before I think of it. Now, I guess I'll need some coffee cream, too—half a pint.

MILKMAN: Coffee cream. O.K.

LOLA: Now let me see. . . . Oh, yes, I want a quart of buttermilk. My husband has liked buttermilk ever since he stopped drinking. My husband's an alcoholic. Had to give it up. Did I ever tell you? (*Starts out. Stops at sink.*)

MILKMAN: Yes, Lady. (*Starts to go. She follows.*)

LOLA: Now he can't get enough to eat. Eats six times a day. He comes home in the middle of the morning, and I fix him a snack. In the middle of the afternoon he has a malted milk with an egg in it. And then another snack before he goes to bed.

MILKMAN: What'd ya know?

LOLA: Keeps his energy up.

MILKMAN: I'll bet. Anything else, Lady?

LOLA: No, I guess not.

MILKMAN (*going out*): Be back in a jiffy. (*Gives her slip.*)

LOLA: I'm just so sorry I put you to so much extra work. (*He goes. Returns shortly with dairy products*) After this I'm going to do my best to remember to check the card. I don't think it's right to put people to extra work. (*Goes to icebox, puts things away.*)

MILKMAN (*smiles, is willing to forget*): That's all right, Lady.

LOLA: Maybe you'd like a piece of cake or a sandwich. Got some awfully good cold cuts in the icebox.

MILKMAN: No, thanks, Lady.

LOLA: Or maybe you'd like a cup of coffee.

MILKMAN: No, thanks. (*He's checking the items, putting them on the bill.*)

LOLA: You're just a young man. You oughta be going to college. I think everyone should have an education. Do you like your job?

MILKMAN: It's O.K. (*Looks at* LOLA.)

LOLA: You're a husky young man. You oughta be out in Hollywood making those Tarzan movies.

MILKMAN (*steps back. Feels a little flattered*): When I first began on this job I didn't get enough exercise, so I started working out on the bar-bells.

LOLA: Bar-bells?

MILKMAN: Keeps you in trim.

LOLA (*fascinated*): Yes, I imagine.

MILKMAN: I sent my picture in to *Strength and Health* last month. (*Proudly*) It's a physique study! If they print it, I'll bring you a copy.

LOLA: Oh, will you? I think we should all take better care of ourselves, don't you?

MILKMAN: If you ask me, Lady, that's what's wrong with the world today. We're not taking care of ourselves.

LOLA: I wouldn't be surprised.

MILKMAN: Every morning, I do forty push-ups before I eat my breakfast.

LOLA: Push-ups?

MILKMAN: Like this. (*He spreads himself on the floor and demonstrates, doing three rapid push-ups.* LOLA *couldn't be more fascinated.*

Then he springs to his feet) That's good for shoulder development. Wanta feel my shoulders?

LOLA: Why . . . why, yes. (*He makes one arm tense and puts her hand on his shoulder*) Why, it's just like a rock.

MILKMAN: I can do seventy-nine without stopping.

LOLA: Seventy-nine!

MILKMAN: Now feel my arm.

LOLA (*does so*): Goodness!

MILKMAN: You wouldn't believe what a puny kid I was. Sickly, no appetite.

LOLA: Is that a fact? And, my! Look at you now.

MILKMAN (*very proud*): Shucks, any man could do the same . . . if he just takes care of himself.

LOLA: Oh, sure, sure. (*A horn is heard offstage.*)

MILKMAN: There's my buddy. I gotta beat it. (*Picks up his things, shakes hands, leaves hurriedly*) See you tomorrow, Lady.

LOLA: 'Bye.

(*She watches him from kitchen window until he gets out of sight. There is a look of some wonder on her face, an emptiness, as though she were unable to understand anything that ever happened to her. She looks at clock, runs into living room, turns on radio. A pulsating tom-tom is heard as a theme introduction. Then the announcer.*)

ANNOUNCER (*in dramatic voice*): TA-BOOoooo! (*Now in a very soft, highly personalized voice.* LOLA *sits on couch, eats candy*) It's Ta-boo, radio listeners, your fifteen minutes of temptation. (*An alluring voice*) Won't you join me? (LOLA *swings feet up*) Won't you leave behind your routine, the dull cares that make up your day-to-day existence, the little worries, the uncertainties, the confusions of the work-a-day world and follow me where pagan spirits hold sway, where lithe natives dance on a moon-enchanted isle, where palm trees sway with the restless ocean tide, restless surging

on the white shore? Won't you come along? (*More tom-tom*) (*Now in an oily voice*) But remember, it's TA-BOOOOOooooo-OOO! (*Now the tom-tom again, going into a sensual, primitive rhythm melody.* LOLA *has been transfixed from the beginning of the program. She lies down on the davenport, listening, then slowly, growing more and more comfortable.*)

WESTERN UNION BOY (*at door*): Telegram for Miss Marie Buckholder.

LOLA: She's not here.

WESTERN UNION BOY: Sign here.

(LOLA *does, then she closes the door and brings the envelope into the house, looking at it wonderingly. This is a major temptation for her. She puts the envelope on the table but can't resist looking at it. Finally she gives in and takes it to the kitchen to steam it open. Then* MARIE *and* TURK *burst into the room.* LOLA, *confused, wonders what to do with the telegram, then decides, just in the nick of time, to jam it in her apron pocket.*)

MARIE: Mrs. Delaney! (*Turns off radio. At the sound of* MARIE'S *voice,* LOLA *embarrassedly slips the message into her pocket and runs in to greet them*) Mind if we turn your parlor into an art studio?

LOLA: Sure, go right ahead. Hi, Turk. (TURK *gives a wave of his arm.*)

MARIE (*to* TURK, *indicating her bedroom*): You can change in there, Turk. (*Exit to bedroom.*)

LOLA (*puzzled*): Change?

MARIE: He's gotta take off his clothes.

LOLA: Huh? (*Closes door.*)

MARIE: These drawings are for my life class.

LOLA (*consoled but still mystified*): Oh.

MARIE (*sits on couch*): Turk's the best male model we've had all year. Lotsa athletes pose for us 'cause they've all got muscles. They're easier to draw.

LOLA: You mean . . . he's gonna pose *naked?*

MARIE (*laughs*): No. The women do, but the men are always more proper. Turk's going to pose in his track suit.

LOLA: Oh. (*Almost to herself*) The women pose naked but the men don't. (*This strikes her as a startling inconsistency*) If it's all right for a woman, it oughta be for a man.

MARIE (*businesslike*): The man always keeps covered. (*Calling to* TURK) Hurry up, Turk.

TURK (*with all his muscles in place, he comes out. He is not at all self-conscious about his semi-nudity. His body is something he takes very much for granted.* LOLA *is a little dazed by the spectacle of flesh*): How do you want this lovely body? Same pose I took in Art Class?

MARIE: Yah. Over there where I can get more light on you.

TURK (*opens door. Starts pose*): Anything in the house I can use for a javelin?

MARIE: Is there, Mrs. Delaney?

LOLA: How about the broom?

TURK: O.K. (LOLA *runs out to get it.* TURK *goes to her in kitchen, takes it, returns to living room and resumes pose.*)

MARIE (*from her sofa, studying* TURK *in relation to her sketch-pad, moves his leg*): Your left foot a little more this way. (*Studying it*) O.K., hold it. (*Starts sketching rapidly and industriously.* LOLA *looks on, lingeringly.*)

LOLA (*starts unwillingly into kitchen, changes her mind and returns to the scene of action.* MARIE *and* TURK *are too busy to comment.* LOLA *looks at sketch, inspecting it*): Well . . . that's real pretty, Marie. (MARIE *is intent.* LOLA *moves closer to look at the drawing*) It . . . it's real artistic. (*Pause*) I wish *I* was artistic.

TURK: Baby, I can't hold this pose very long at a time.

MARIE: Rest whenever you feel like it.

TURK: O.K.

MARIE (*to* LOLA): If I make a good drawing, they'll use it for the posters for the Spring Relays.

LOLA: Ya. You told me.

MARIE (*to* TURK): After I'm finished with these sketches I won't have to bother you any more.

TURK: No bother. (*Rubs his shoulder—he poses*) Hard pose, though. Gets me in the shoulder. (MARIE *pays no attention.* LOLA *peers at him so closely he becomes a little self-conscious and breaks pose. This also breaks* LOLA'S *concentration.*)

LOLA: I'll heat you up some coffee. (*Goes to kitchen.*)

TURK (*softly to* MARIE): Hey, can't you keep her out of here? She makes me feel naked.

MARIE (*laughs*): I can't keep her out of her own house, can I?

TURK: Didn't she ever see a man before?

MARIE: Not a big, beautiful man like you, Turky. (TURK *smiles, is flattered by any recognition of his physical worth, takes it as an immediate invitation to love-making. Pulling her up, he kisses her as* DOC *comes up on porch.* MARIE *pushes* TURK *away*) Turk, get back in your corner. (DOC *comes in from outside.*)

DOC (*cheerily*): Hi, everyone.

MARIE: Hi.

TURK: Hi, Doc. (DOC *then sees* TURK, *feels immediate resentment. Goes into kitchen to* LOLA) What's goin' on here?

LOLA (*getting cups*): Oh, hello, Daddy. Marie's doin' a drawin'.

DOC (*trying to size up the situation.* MARIE *and* TURK *are too busy to speak*): Oh.

LOLA: I've just heated up the coffee, want some?

DOC: Yeah. What happened to Turk's clothes?

LOLA: Marie's doing some drawings for her *life* class, Doc.

DOC: Can't she draw him with his clothes on?

LOLA (*with coffee. Very professional now*): No, Doc, it's not the same. See, it's a *life* class. They draw bodies. They all do it, right in the classroom.

DOC: Why, Marie's just a young girl; she shouldn't be drawing things like that. I don't care if they do teach it at college. It's not right.

LOLA (*disclaiming responsibility*): I don't know, Doc.

TURK (*turns*): I'm tired.

MARIE (*squats at his feet*): Just let me finish the foot.

DOC: Why doesn't she draw something else, a bowl of flowers or a cathedral . . . or a sunset?

LOLA: All she told me, Doc, was if she made a good drawing of Turk, they'd use it for the posters for the Spring Relay. (*Pause*) So I guess they don't want sunsets.

DOC: What if someone walked into the house now? What would they think?

LOLA: Daddy, Marie just asked me if it was all right if Turk came in and posed for her. Now that's all she said, and I said O.K. But if you think it's wrong I won't let them do it again.

DOC: I just don't like it.

MARIE: Hold it a minute more.

TURK: O.K.

LOLA: Well, then you speak to Marie about it if. . . .

DOC (*he'd never mention anything disapprovingly to* MARIE): No, Baby. I couldn't do that.

LOLA: Well, then. . . .

DOC: Besides, it's not her fault. If those college people make her do drawings like that, I suppose she has to do them. I just don't think it's right she should have to, that's all.

LOLA: Well, if you think it's wrong. . . .

DOC (*ready to dismiss it*): Never mind.

LOLA: I don't see any harm in it, Daddy.

DOC: Forget it.

LOLA (*goes to icebox*): Would you like some buttermilk?

DOC: Thanks. (MARIE *finishes sketch.*)

MARIE: O.K. That's all I can do for today.

TURK: Is there anything I can do for *you?*

MARIE: Yes—get your clothes on.

TURK: O.K., coach. (TURK *exits.*)

LOLA: You know what Marie said, Doc? She said that the women pose naked, but the men don't.

DOC: Why, of course, honey.

LOLA: Why is that?

DOC (*stumped*): Well. . . .

LOLA: If it's all right for a woman it oughta be for a man. But the man always keeps covered. That's what she said.

DOC: Well, that's the way it should be, honey. A man, after all, is a man, and he . . . well, he has to protect himself.

LOLA: And a woman doesn't?

DOC: It's different, honey.

LOLA: Is it? I've got a secret, Doc. Bruce is comin'.

DOC: Is that so?

LOLA (*after a glum silence*): You know Marie's boy friend from Cincinnati. I promised Marie a long time ago, when her fiancé came to town, dinner was on me. So I'm getting out the best china and cooking the best meal you ever sat down to.

DOC: When did she get the news?

LOLA: The telegram came this morning.

DOC: That's fine. That Bruce sounds to me like just the fellow for her. I think I'll go in and congratulate her.

LOLA (*nervous*): Not now, Doc.

DOC: Why not?

LOLA: Well, Turk's there. It might make him feel embarrassed.

DOC: Well, why doesn't Turk clear out now that Bruce is coming? What's he hanging around for? She's engaged to marry Bruce, isn't she? (TURK *enters from bedroom and goes to* MARIE, *starting to make advances.*)

LOLA: Marie's just doing a picture of him, Doc.

DOC: You always stick up for him. You encourage him.

LOLA: Shhh, Daddy. Don't get upset.

DOC (*very angrily*): All right, but if anything happens to the girl I'll never forgive you. (DOC *goes upstairs.* TURK *then grabs* MARIE, *kisses her passionately.*)

(*The Curtain Falls.*)

SCENE TWO

SCENE: *The same evening, after supper. Outside it is dark. There has been an almost miraculous transformation of the entire house.* LOLA, *apparently, has been working hard and fast all day. The rooms are spotlessly clean and there are such additions as new lampshades, fresh curtains, etc. In the kitchen all the enamel surfaces glisten, and piles of junk that have lain around for months have been disposed of.* LOLA *and* DOC *are in the kitchen, he washing up the dishes and she puttering around putting the finishing touches on her housecleaning.*

LOLA (*at stove*): There's still some beans left. Do you want them, Doc?

DOC: I had enough.

LOLA: I hope you got enough to eat tonight, Daddy. I been so busy cleaning I didn't have time to fix you much.

DOC: I wasn't very hungry.

LOLA (*at table, cleaning up*): You know what? Mrs. Coffman said I could come over and pick all the lilacs I wanted for my centerpiece tomorrow. Isn't that nice? I don't think she poisoned Little Sheba, do you?

DOC: I never did think so, Baby. Where'd you get the new curtains?

LOLA: I went out and bought them this afternoon. Aren't they pretty? Be careful of the woodwork, it's been varnished.

DOC: How come, honey?

LOLA (*gets broom and dustpan from closet*): Bruce is comin'. I figured I had to do my spring housecleaning some time.

DOC: You got all this done in one day? The house hasn't looked like this in years.

LOLA: I can be a good housekeeper when I want to be, can't I, Doc?

DOC (*holding dustpan for* LOLA): I never had any complaints. Where's Marie now?

LOLA: I don't know, Doc. I haven't seen her since she left here this morning with Turk.

DOC (*with a look of disapproval*): Marie's too nice to be wasting her time with him.

LOLA: Daddy, Marie can take care of herself. Don't worry. (*Returns broom to closet.*)

DOC (*goes into living room*): 'Bout time for Fibber McGee and Molly.

LOLA (*untying apron. Goes to closet and then back door*): Daddy, I'm gonna run over to Mrs. Coffman's and see if she's got any silver polish. I'll be right back. (DOC *goes to radio.* LOLA *exits. At the radio* DOC *starts twisting the dial. He rejects one noisy program after another, then very unexpectedly he comes across a rendition of Schubert's famous "Ave Maria," sung in a high soprano voice. Probably he has encountered the piece before somewhere, but it is now making its first impression on him. Gradually he is transported into a world of ethereal beauty which he never knew existed. He listens intently. The music has expressed some ideal of beauty he never fully realized and he is even a little mystified. Then* LOLA *comes in the back door, letting it slam, breaking the spell, and announcing in a loud, energetic voice*) Isn't it funny? I'm not a bit tired tonight. You'd think after working so hard all day I'd be pooped.

DOC (*in the living room; he cringes*): Baby, don't use that word.

LOLA (*to* DOC *on couch. Sets silver polish down and joins* DOC): I'm sorry, Doc. I hear Marie and Turk say it all the time, and I thought it was kinda cute.

DOC: It . . . it sounds vulgar.

LOLA (*kisses* DOC): I won't say it again, Daddy. Where's Fibber McGee?

DOC: Not quite time yet.

LOLA: Let's get some peppy music.

DOC (*tuning in a sentimental dance band*): That what you want?

LOLA: That's O.K. (DOC *takes a pack of cards off radio and starts shuffling them, very deftly*) I love to watch you shuffle cards, Daddy. You use your hands so gracefully. (*She watches closely*) Do me one of your card tricks.

DOC: Baby, you've seen them all.

LOLA: But I never get tired of them.

DOC: O.K. Take a card. (LOLA *does*) Keep it now. Don't tell me what it is.

LOLA: I won't.

DOC (*shuffling cards again*): Now put it back in the deck. I won't look. (*He closes his eyes.*)

LOLA (*with childish delight*): All right.

DOC: Put it back.

LOLA: Uh-huh.

DOC: O.K. (*Shuffles cards again, cutting them, taking top half off, exposing* LOLA's *card, to her astonishment*) That your card?

LOLA (*unbelievingly*): Daddy, how did you do it?

DOC: Baby, I've pulled that trick on you dozens of times.

LOLA: But I never understand how you do it.

DOC: Very simple.

LOLA: Docky, show me how you do that.

DOC (*you can forgive him a harmless feeling of superiority*): Try it for yourself.

LOLA: Doc, you're clever. I never could do it.

DOC: Nothing to it.

LOLA: There is *too*. Show me how you do it, Doc.

DOC: And give away all my secrets? It's a gift, honey. A magic gift.

LOLA: Can't you give it to me?

DOC (*picks up newspaper*): A man has to keep some things to himself.

LOLA: It's not a gift at all, it's just some trick you *learned*.

DOC: O.K., Baby, any way you want to look at it.

LOLA: Let's have some music. How soon do you have to meet Ed Anderson? (DOC *turns on radio.*)

DOC: I still got a little time. (*Pleased.*)

LOLA: Marie's going to be awfully happy when she sees the house all fixed up. She can entertain Bruce here when he comes, and maybe we could have a little party here and you can do your card tricks.

DOC: O.K.

LOLA: I think a young girl should be able to bring her friends home.

DOC: Sure.

LOLA: We never liked to sit around the house 'cause the folks always stayed there with us. (*Rises—starts dancing alone*) Remember the dances we used to go to, Daddy?

DOC: Sure.

LOLA: We had awful good times—for a while, didn't we?

DOC: Yes, Baby.

LOLA: Remember the homecoming dance, when Charlie Kettlekamp and I won the Charleston contest?

DOC: Please, honey, I'm trying to read.

LOLA: And you got mad at him 'cause he thought he should take me home afterwards.

DOC: I did not.

LOLA: Yes, you did—Charlie was all right, Doc, really he was. You were just jealous.

DOC: I *wasn't* jealous.

LOLA (*she has become very coy and flirtatious now, an old dog playing old tricks*): You got jealous every time we went out any place and I even looked at another boy. There was never anything between Charlie and me; there never was.

DOC: That was a long time ago. . . .

LOLA: Lots of other boys called me up for dates . . . Sammy Knight . . . Hand Biderman . . . Dutch McCoy.

DOC: Sure, Baby. You were the "it" girl.

LOLA (*pleading for his attention now*): But I saved all my dates for *you*, didn't I, Doc?

DOC (*trying to joke*): As far as *I* know, Baby.

LOLA (*hurt*): Daddy, I did. You *got* to believe that. I never took a date with any other boy but you.

DOC (*a little weary and impatient*): That's all forgotten now. (*Turns off radio.*)

LOLA: How can you talk that way, Doc? That was the happiest time of our lives. I'll never forget it.

DOC (*disapprovingly*): Honey!

LOLA (*at the window*): That was a nice spring. The trees were so heavy and green and the air smelled so sweet. Remember the walks we used to take, down to the old chapel, where it was so quiet and still? (*Sits on couch.*)

DOC: In the spring a young man's fancy turns . . . pretty fancy.

LOLA (*in the same tone of reverie*): I was pretty then, wasn't I, Doc? Remember the first time you kissed me? You were scared as a young girl, I believe, Doc; you trembled so. (*She is being very soft and delicate. Caught in the reverie, he chokes a little and cannot answer*) We'd been going together all year and you were always so shy. Then for the first time you grabbed me and kissed me. Tears came to your eyes, Doc, and you said you'd love me forever and ever. Remember? You said . . . if I didn't marry you, you wanted to die . . . I remember 'cause it scared me for anyone to say a thing like that.

DOC (*in a repressed tone*): Yes, Baby.

LOLA: And when the evening came on, we stretched out on the cool grass and you kissed me all night long.

DOC (*opens doors*): Baby, you've got to forget those things. That was twenty years ago.

LOLA: I'll soon be forty. Those years have just vanished—vanished into thin air.

DOC: Yes.

LOLA: Just disappeared—like Little Sheba. (*Pause*) Maybe you're sorry you married me now. You didn't know I was going to get old and fat and sloppy. . . .

DOC: Oh, Baby!

LOLA: It's the truth. That's what I am. But I didn't know it, either. Are you sorry you married me, Doc?

DOC: Of course not.

LOLA: I mean, are you sorry you *had* to marry me?

DOC (*goes to porch*): We were never going to talk about that, Baby.

LOLA (*following* DOC *out*): You *were* the first one, Daddy, the *only* one. I'd just die if you didn't believe that.

DOC (*tenderly*): I know, Baby.

LOLA: You were so nice and so proper, Doc; I thought nothing we could do together could ever be wrong—or make us unhappy. Do you think we did wrong, Doc?

DOC (*consoling*): No, Baby, of course I don't.

LOLA: I don't think anyone knows about it except my folks, do you?

DOC: Of course not, Baby.

LOLA (*follows him in*): I wish the baby had lived, Doc. I don't think that woman knew her business, do you, Doc?

DOC: I guess not.

LOLA: If we'd gone to a doctor, she would have lived, don't you think?

DOC: Perhaps.

LOLA: A doctor wouldn't have known we'd just got married, would he? Why were we so afraid?

DOC (*sits on couch*): We were just kids. Kids don't know how to look after things.

LOLA (*sits on couch*): If we'd had the baby she'd be a young girl now; then maybe you'd have *saved* your money, Doc, and she could be going to college—like Marie.

DOC: Baby, what's done is done.

LOLA: It must make you feel bad at times to think you had to give up being a doctor and to think you don't have any money like you used to.

DOC: No . . . no, Baby. We should never feel bad about what's past. What's in the past can't be helped. You . . . you've got to forget it and live for the present. If you can't forget the past, you stay in it and never get out. I might be a big M.D. today, instead of a chiro-

practor; we might have had a family to raise and be with us now; I might still have a lot of money if I'd used my head and invested it carefully, instead of gettin' drunk every night. We might have a nice house, and comforts, and friends. But we don't have any of those things. So what! We gotta keep on living, don't we? I can't stop just 'cause I made a few mistakes. I gotta keep goin' . . . somehow.

LOLA: Sure, Daddy.

DOC (*sighs and wipes brow*): I . . . I wish you wouldn't ask me questions like that, Baby. Let's not talk about it any more. I gotta keep goin', and not let things upset me, or . . . or . . . *I* saw enough at the City Hospital to keep me sober for a long time.

LOLA: I'm sorry, Doc. I didn't mean to upset you.

DOC: I'm not upset.

LOLA: What time'll you be home tonight?

DOC: 'Bout eleven o'clock.

LOLA: I wish you didn't have to go tonight. I feel kinda lonesome.

DOC: Yah, so am I, Baby, but some time soon, we'll go *out* together. I kinda hate to go to those night clubs and places since I stopped drinking, but some night I'll take you out to dinner.

LOLA: Oh, will you, Daddy?

DOC: We'll get dressed up and go to the Windermere and have a fine dinner and dance between courses.

LOLA (*eagerly*): Let's do it, Daddy. I got a little money saved up. I got about forty dollars out in the kitchen. We can take that if you need it.

DOC: I'll have plenty of money the first of the month.

LOLA (*she has made a quick response to the change of mood, seeing a future evening of carefree fun*): What are we sitting around here so serious for? (*Turns to radio*) Let's have some music. (LOLA *gets*

a lively foxtrot on the radio, dances with DOC. *They begin dancing vigorously as though to dispense with the sadness of the preceding dialogue, but slowly it winds them and leaves* LOLA *panting*) We oughta go dancing . . . all the time, Docky. . . . It'd be good for us. Maybe if I danced more often, I'd lose . . . some of . . . this fat. I remember . . . I used to be able to dance like this . . . all night . . . and not even notice . . . it. (LOLA *breaks into a Charleston routine as of yore*) Remember the Charleston, Daddy? (DOC *is clapping his hands in rhythm. Then* MARIE *bursts in through the front door, the personification of the youth that* LOLA *is trying to recapture.*)

DOC: Hi, Marie.

MARIE: What are you trying to do, a jig, Mrs. Delaney? (MARIE *doesn't intend her remark to be cruel, but it wounds* LOLA. LOLA *stops abruptly in her dancing, losing all the fun she has been able to create for herself. She feels she might cry; so to hide her feelings she hurries quietly out to kitchen, but* DOC *and* MARIE *do not notice.* MARIE *notices the change in atmosphere*) Hey, what's been happening around here?

DOC: Lola got to feeling industrious. You oughta see the kitchen.

MARIE (*running to kitchen, where she is too observant of the changes to notice* LOLA *weeping in corner.* LOLA, *of course, straightens up as soon as* MARIE *enters*): What got into you, Mrs. Delaney? You've done wonders with the house. It looks marvelous.

LOLA (*quietly*): Thanks, Marie.

MARIE (*darting back into living room*): I can hardly believe I'm in the same place.

DOC: Think your boy friend'll like it? (*Meaning* BRUCE.)

MARIE (*thinking of* TURK): You know how men are. Turk never notices things like that. (*Starts into her room blowing a kiss to* DOC *on her way.* LOLA *comes back in, dabbing at her eyes.*)

DOC: Turk? (MARIE *is gone; he turns to* LOLA) What's the matter, honey?

LOLA: I don't know.

DOC: Feel bad about something?

LOLA: I didn't want her to see me dancing that way. Makes me feel sorta silly.

DOC: Why, you're a fine dancer.

LOLA: I feel kinda silly.

MARIE (*jumps back into the room with her telegram*): My telegram's here. When did it come?

LOLA: It came about an hour ago, honey. (LOLA *looks nervously at* DOC. DOC *looks puzzled and a little sore.*)

MARIE: Bruce is coming! "Arriving tomorrow 5:00 P.M. CST, Flight 22, Love, Bruce." When did the telegram come?

DOC (*looking hopelessly at* LOLA): So it came an hour ago.

LOLA (*nervously*): Isn't it nice I got the house all cleaned? Marie, you bring Bruce to dinner with us tomorrow night. It'll be a sort of wedding present.

MARIE: That would be wonderful, Mrs. Delaney, but I don't want you to go to any trouble.

LOLA: No trouble at all. Now I insist. (*Front doorbell rings*) That must be Turk.

MARIE (*whisper*): Don't tell *him.* (*Goes to door.* LOLA *scampers to kitchen*) Hi, Turk. Come on in.

TURK (*entering. Stalks her*): Hi. (*Looks around to see if anyone is present, then takes her in his arms and starts to kiss her.*)

LOLA: I'm sorry, Doc. I'm sorry about the telegram.

DOC: Baby, people don't do things like that. Don't you understand? *Nice* people don't.

MARIE: Stop it!

TURK: What's the matter?

MARIE: They're in the kitchen. (TURK *sits with book.*)

DOC: Why didn't you give it to her when it came?

LOLA: Turk was posing for Marie this morning and I couldn't give it to her while he was here. (TURK *listens at door.*)

DOC: Well, it just isn't nice to open other people's mail. (TURK *goes to* MARIE'S *door.*)

LOLA: I guess I'm not nice then. That what you mean?

MARIE: Turk, will you get away from that door?

DOC: No, Baby, but. . . .

LOLA: I don't see any harm in it, Doc. I steamed it open and sealed it back. (TURK *at switch in living room*) She'll never know the difference. I don't see any harm in that, Doc.

DOC (*gives up*): O.K., Baby, if you don't see any harm in it, I guess I can't explain. (*Starts getting ready to go.*)

LOLA: I'm sorry, Doc. Honest, I'll never do it again. Will you forgive me?

DOC (*giving her a peck of a kiss*): I forgive you.

MARIE (*comes back with book*): Let's look like we're studying.

LOLA: What time'll you be home tonight?

TURK: Biology? Hot dog!

LOLA (*after* MARIE *leaves her room*): Now I feel better. Do you have to go now? (TURK *sits by* MARIE *on the couch.*)

DOC: Yah.

LOLA: Before you go, why don't you show your tricks to Marie?

DOC (*reluctantly*): Not now.

LOLA: Oh, please do. They'd be crazy about them.

DOC (*with pride*): O.K. (*Preens himself a little*) If you think they'd enjoy them. . . . (LOLA, *starting to living room, stops suddenly upon seeing* MARIE *and* TURK *spooning behind a book. A broad, pleased smile breaks on her face and she stands silently watching.* DOC *is at sink*) Well . . . what's the matter, Baby?

LOLA (*in a soft voice*): Oh . . . nothing . . . nothing . . . Doc.

DOC: Well, do you want me to show 'em my tricks or don't you?

LOLA (*coming back to center kitchen; in a secretive voice with a little giggle*): I guess they wouldn't be interested now.

DOC (*with injured pride. A little sore*): Oh, very well.

LOLA: Come and look, Daddy.

DOC (*shocked and angry*): No!

LOLA: Just one little look. They're just kids, Daddy. It's sweet. (*Drags him by arm.*)

DOC (*jerking loose*): Stop it, Baby. I won't do it. It's not decent to snoop around spying on people like that. It's cheap and mischievous and mean.

LOLA (*this had never occurred to her*): Is it?

DOC: Of course it is.

LOLA: I don't spy on Marie and Turk to be mischievous and mean.

DOC: Then why *do* you do it?

LOLA: You watch young people make love in the movies, don't you, Doc? There's nothing wrong with that. And I *know* Marie and I like her, and Turk's nice, too. They're both so young and pretty. Why shouldn't I watch them?

DOC: I give up.

LOLA: Well, why shouldn't I?

DOC: I don't know, Baby, but it's not nice. (TURK *kisses* MARIE'S *ear.*)

LOLA (*plaintive*): I think it's one of the nicest things I know.

MARIE: Let's go out on the porch. (*They steal out.*)

DOC: It's not right for Marie to do that, particularly since Bruce is coming. We shouldn't allow it.

LOLA: Oh, they don't do any harm, Doc. I think it's all right. (TURK *and* MARIE *go to porch.*)

DOC: It's not all right. I don't know why you encourage that sort of thing.

LOLA: I don't encourage it.

DOC: You do, too. You like that fellow Turk. You said so. And I say he's no good. Marie's sweet and innocent; she doesn't understand guys like him. I think I oughta run him outa the house.

LOLA: Daddy, you wouldn't do that.

DOC (*very heated*): Then you talk to her and tell her how we feel.

LOLA: Hush, Daddy. They'll hear you.

DOC: I don't care if they do hear me.

LOLA (*to* DOC *at stove*): Don't get upset, Daddy. Bruce is coming and Turk won't be around any longer. I promise you.

DOC: All right. I better go.

LOLA: I'll go with you, Doc. Just let me run up and get a sweater. Now wait for me.

DOC: Hurry, Baby.

(LOLA *goes upstairs.* DOC *is at platform when he hears* TURK *laugh on the porch.* DOC *sees whiskey bottle. Reaches for it and hears* MARIE *giggle. Turns away as* TURK *laughs again. Turns back to the bottle and hears* LOLA'S *voice from upstairs.*)

LOLA: I'll be there in a minute, Doc. (*Enters downstairs*) I'm all ready. (DOC *turns out kitchen lights and they go into living room*) I'm walking Doc down to the bus. (DOC *sees* TURK *with* LOLA'S *picture. Takes it out of his hand, puts it on shelf as* LOLA *leads him out.* DOC *is offstage*) Then I'll go for a long walk in the moonlight. Have a good time. (*She exits.*)

MARIE: 'Bye, Mrs. Delaney. (*Exits.*)

TURK: He hates my guts. (*Goes to front door.*)

MARIE: Oh, he does not. (*Follows* TURK, *blocks his exit in door.*)

TURK: Yes, he does. If you ask me, he's jealous.

MARIE: Jealous?

TURK: I've always thought he had a crush on you.

MARIE: Now, Turk, don't be silly. Doc is nice to me. It's just in a few little things he does, like fixing my breakfast, but he's nice to everyone.

TURK: He ever make a pass?

MARIE: No. He'd never get fresh.

TURK: He'd better not.

MARIE: Turk, don't be ridiculous. Doc's such a nice, quiet man; if he gets any fun out of being nice to me, why not?

TURK: He's got a wife of his own, hasn't he? Why doesn't he make a few passes at her?

MARIE: Things like that are none of our business.

TURK: O.K. How about a snuggle, lovely?

MARIE (*a little prim and businesslike*): No more for tonight, Turk.

TURK: Why's tonight different from any other night?

MARIE: I think we should make it a rule, every once in a while, just to sit and talk. (*Starts to sit on couch, but goes to chair.*)

TURK (*restless, sits on couch*): O.K. What'll we talk about?

MARIE: Well . . . there's lotsa things.

TURK: O.K. Start in.

MARIE: A person doesn't start a conversation that way.

TURK: Start it any way you want to.

MARIE: Two people should have something to talk about, like politics or psychology or religion.

TURK: How 'bout sex?

MARIE: Turk!

TURK (*chases her around couch*): Have you read the Kinsey Report, Miss Buckholder?

MARIE: I should say not.

TURK: How old were you when you had your first affair, Miss Buckholder? And did you ever have relations with your grandfather?

MARIE: Turk, stop it.

TURK: You wanted to talk about something; I was only trying to please. Let's have a kiss.

MARIE: Not tonight.

TURK: Who you savin' it up for?

MARIE: Don't talk that way.

TURK (*gets up, yawns*): Well, thanks, Miss Buckholder, for a nice evening. It's been a most enjoyable talk.

MARIE (*anxious*): Turk, where are you going?

TURK: I guess I'm a man of action, Baby.

MARIE: Turk, don't go.

TURK: Why not? I'm not doing any good here.

MARIE: Don't go.

TURK (*returns and she touches him. They sit on couch*): Now why didn't you think of this before? C'mon, let's get to work.

MARIE: Oh, Turk, this is all we ever do.

TURK: Are you complaining?

MARIE (*weakly*): No.

TURK: Then what do you want to put on such a front for?

MARIE: It's not a front.

TURK: What else is it? (*Mimicking*) Oh, no, Turk. Not tonight, Turk. I want to talk about philosophy, Turk. (*Himself again*) When all the time you know that if I went outa here without givin' you a good lovin' up you'd be sore as hell. . . . Wouldn't you?

MARIE (*she has to admit to herself it's true; she chuckles*): Oh . . . Turk. . . .

TURK: It's true, isn't it?

MARIE: Maybe.

TURK: How about tonight, lovely; going to be lonesome?

MARIE: Turk, you're in training.

TURK: What of it? I can throw the old javelin any old time, *any* old time. C'mon, Baby, we've got by with it before, haven't we?

MARIE: I'm not so sure.

TURK: What do you mean?

MARIE: Sometimes I think Mrs. Delaney knows.

TURK: Well, bring her along. I'll take care of her, too, if it'll keep her quiet.

MARIE (*a pretense of being shocked*): Turk!

TURK: What makes you think so?

MARIE: Women just sense those things. She asks so many questions.

TURK: She ever *say* anything?

MARIE: No.

TURK: Now *you're* imagining things.

MARIE: Maybe.

TURK: Well, stop it.

MARIE: O.K.

TURK (*follows* MARIE): Honey, I know I talk awful rough around you at times; I never was a very gentlemanly bastard, but you really don't mind it . . . do you? (*She only smiles mischievously*) Anyway, you know I'm nuts about you.

MARIE (*smug*): Are you?

(*Now they engage in a little rough-house, he cuffing her like an affectionate bear, she responding with "Stop it," "Turk, that hurt," etc. And she slaps him playfully. Then they laugh together at their own pretense. Now* LOLA *enters the back way very quietly, tiptoeing through the dark kitchen, standing by the doorway where she can peek at them. There is a quiet, satisfied smile on her face. She watches every move they make, alertly.*)

TURK: Now, Miss Buckholder, what is your opinion of the psychodynamic pressure of living in the atomic age?

MARIE (*playfully*): Turk, don't make fun of me.

TURK: Tonight?

MARIE (*her eyes dance as she puts him off just a little longer*): Well.

TURK: Tonight will never come again. (*This is true. She smiles*) O.K.?

MARIE: Tonight will never come again. . . . (*They embrace and start to dance*) Let's go out somewhere first and have a few beers. We can't come back till they're asleep.

TURK: O.K.

(*They dance slowly out the door. Then* LOLA *moves quietly into the living room and out onto the porch. There she can be heard calling plaintively in a lost voice.*)

LOLA: Little Sheba . . . come back. . . . Come back, Little Sheba. Come back.

(*The Curtain Falls.*)

Act Two

SCENE ONE

SCENE: *The next morning.* LOLA *and* DOC *are at breakfast again.* LOLA *is rambling on while* DOC *sits meditatively, his head down, his face in his hands.*

LOLA (*in a light, humorous way, as though the faults of youth were as blameless as the uncontrollable actions of a puppy. Chuckles*): Then they danced for a while and went out together, arm in arm. . . .

DOC (*sitting at table, very nervous and tense*): I don't wanna hear any more about it, Baby.

LOLA: What's the matter, Docky?

DOC: Nothing.

LOLA: You look like you didn't feel very good.

DOC: I didn't sleep well last night.

LOLA: You didn't take any of those sleeping pills, did you?

DOC: No.

LOLA: Well, don't. The doctors say they're terrible for you.

DOC: I'll feel better after a while.

LOLA: Of course you will.

DOC: What time did Marie come in last night?

LOLA: I don't know, Doc. I went to bed early and went right to sleep. Why?

DOC: Oh . . . nothing.

LOLA: You musta slept if you didn't hear her.

DOC: I heard her; it was after midnight.

LOLA: Then what did you ask me for?

DOC: I wasn't sure it was her.

LOLA: What do you mean?

DOC: I thought I heard a man's voice.

LOLA: Turk probably brought her inside the door.

DOC (*troubled*): I thought I heard someone laughing. A man's laugh. . . . I guess I was just hearing things.

LOLA: Say your prayer?

DOC (*gets up*): Yes.

LOLA: Kiss me 'bye. (*He leans over and kisses her, then puts on his coat and starts to leave*) Do you think you could get home a little early? I want you to help me entertain Bruce. Marie said he'd be here about 5:30. I'm going to have a lovely dinner: stuffed pork chops, twice-baked potatoes, and asparagus, and for dessert a big chocolate cake and maybe ice cream. . . .

DOC: Sounds fine.

LOLA: So you get home and help me.

DOC: O.K.

(DOC *leaves kitchen and goes into living room. Again on the chair is* MARIE'S *scarf. He picks it up as before and fondles it. Then there is the sound of* TURK'S *laughter, soft and barely audible. It sounds like*

the laugh of a sated Bacchus. DOC'S *body stiffens. It is a sickening fact he must face and it has been revealed to him in its ugliest light. The lyrical grace, the spiritual ideal of Ave Maria is shattered. He has been fighting the truth, maybe suspecting all along that he was deceiving himself. Now he looks as though he might vomit. All his blind confusion is inside him. With an immobile expression of blankness on his face, he stumbles into the table above the sofa.*)

LOLA (*still in kitchen*): Haven't you gone yet, Docky?

DOC (*dazed*): No . . . no, Baby.

LOLA (*in doorway*): Anything the matter?

DOC: No . . . no, I'm all right now.

(*Drops scarf, takes hat, exits. He has managed to sound perfectly natural. He braces himself and goes out.* LOLA *stands a moment, looking after him with a little curiosity. Then* MRS. COFFMAN *enters, sticks her head in back door.*)

MRS. COFFMAN: Anybody home?

LOLA (*on platform*): 'Morning, Mrs. Coffman.

MRS. COFFMAN (*inspecting the kitchen's new look*): So this is what you've been up to, Mrs. Delaney.

LOLA (*proud*): Yes, I been busy.

(MARIE'S *door opens and closes.* MARIE *sticks her head out of her bedroom to see if the coast is clear, then sticks her head back in again to whisper to* TURK *that he can leave without being observed.*)

MRS. COFFMAN: Busy? Good Lord, I never seen such activity. What got into you, Lady?

LOLA: Company tonight. I thought I'd fix things up a little.

MRS. COFFMAN: You mean you done all this in one day?

LOLA (*with simple pride*): I said I been busy.

MRS. COFFMAN: Dear God, you done your spring housecleaning all in one day. (TURK *appears in living room.*)

LOLA (*appreciating this*): I fixed up the living room a little, too.

MRS. COFFMAN: I must see it. (*Goes into living room.* TURK *overhears her and ducks back into* MARIE'S *room, shutting the door behind himself and* MARIE) I declare! Overnight you turn the place into something really swanky.

LOLA: Yes, and I bought a few things, too.

MRS. COFFMAN: Neat as a pin, and so warm and cozy. I take my hat off to you, Mrs. Delaney. I didn't know you had it in you. All these years, now, I've been sayin' to myself, "That Mrs. Delaney is a good for nothing, sits around the house all day, and never so much as shakes a dust mop." I guess it just shows, we never really know what people are like.

LOLA: I still got some coffee.

MRS. COFFMAN: Not now, Mrs. Delaney. Seeing your house so clean makes me feel ashamed. I gotta get home and get to work. (*Goes to kitchen.*)

LOLA (*follows*): I hafta get busy, too. I got to get out all the silver and china. I like to set the table early, so I can spend the rest of the day looking at it. (*Both laugh.*)

MRS. COFFMAN: Good day, Mrs. Delaney. (*Exits.*)

(*Hearing the screen door slam,* MARIE *guards the kitchen door and* TURK *slips out the front. But neither has counted on* DOC'S *reappearance. After seeing that* TURK *is safe,* MARIE *blows a good-bye kiss to him and joins* LOLA *in the kitchen. But* DOC *is coming in the front door just as* TURK *starts to go out. There is a moment of blind embarrassment, during which* DOC *only looks stupefied and* TURK, *after mumbling an unintelligible apology, runs out. First* DOC *is mystified, trying to figure it all out. His face looks more and more troubled. Meanwhile,* MARIE *and* LOLA *are talking in the kitchen.*)

MARIE: Boo! (*Sneaking up behind* LOLA *at back porch.*)

LOLA (*jumping around*): Heavens! You scared me, Marie. You up already?

MARIE: Yah.

LOLA: This is Saturday. You could sleep as late as you wanted.

MARIE (*pouring a cup of coffee*): I thought I'd get up early and help you.

LOLA: Honey, I'd sure appreciate it. You can put up the table in the living room, after you've had your breakfast. That's where we'll eat. Then you can help me set it. (DOC *closes door.*)

MARIE: O.K.

LOLA: Want a sweet roll?

MARIE: I don't think so. Turk and I had so much beer last night. He got kinda tight.

LOLA: He shouldn't do that, Marie.

MARIE (*starts for living room*): Just keep the coffee hot for me. I'll want another cup in a minute. (*Stops on seeing* DOC) Why, Dr. Delaney! I thought you'd gone.

DOC (*trying to sustain his usual manner*): Good morning, Marie. (*But not looking at her.*)

MARIE (*she immediately wonders*): Why . . . why . . . how long have you been here, Doc?

DOC: Just got here, just this minute.

LOLA (*comes in*): That you, Daddy?

DOC: It's me.

LOLA: What are you doing back?

DOC: I . . . I just thought maybe I'd feel better . . . if I took a glass of soda water. . . .

LOLA: I'm afraid you're not well, Daddy.

DOC: I'm all right. (*Starts for kitchen.*)

LOLA (*helping* MARIE *with table*): The soda's on the drainboard. (DOC *goes to kitchen, fixes some soda, and stands a moment, just thinking. Then he sits sipping the soda, as though he were trying to make up his mind about something*) Marie, would you help me move the table? It'd be nice now if we had a dining room, wouldn't it? But if we had a dining room, I guess we wouldn't have you, Marie. It was my idea to turn the dining room into a bedroom and rent it. I thought of lots of things to do for extra money . . . a few years ago . . . when Doc was so . . . so sick. (*They set up table—*LOLA *gets cloth from cabinet.*)

MARIE: This is a lovely tablecloth.

LOLA: Irish linen. Doc's mother gave it to us when we got married. She gave us all our silver and china, too. The china's Havelin. I'm so proud of it. It's the most valuable possession we own. I just washed it. . . . Will you help me bring it in? (*Getting china from kitchen*) Doc was sorta Mama's boy. He was an only child and his mother thought the sun rose and set in him. Didn't she, Docky? She brought Doc up like a real gentleman.

MARIE: Where are the napkins?

LOLA: Oh, I forgot them. They're so nice I keep them in my bureau drawer with my handkerchiefs. Come upstairs and we'll get them.

(LOLA *and* MARIE *go upstairs. Then* DOC *listens to be sure* LOLA *and* MARIE *are upstairs, looks cautiously at the whiskey bottle on pantry shelf but manages to resist several times. Finally he gives in to temptation, grabs bottle off shelf, then starts wondering how to get past* LOLA *with it. Finally, it occurs to him to wrap it inside his trench coat which he gets from pantry and carries over his arm.* LOLA *and* MARIE *are heard upstairs. They return to the living room and continue setting table as* DOC *enters from kitchen on his way out.*)

LOLA (*coming downstairs*): Did you ever notice how nice he keeps his fingernails? Not many men think of things like that. And he used to take his mother to church every Sunday.

MARIE (*at table*): Oh, Doc's a real gentleman.

LOLA: Treats women like they were all beautiful angels. We went together a whole year before he even kissed me. (DOC *comes through the living room with coat and bottle, going to front door*) On your way back to the office now, Docky?

DOC (*his back to them*): Yes.

LOLA: Aren't you going to kiss me goodbye before you go, Daddy? (*She goes to him and kisses him.* MARIE *catches* DOC's *eye and smiles. Then she exits to her room, leaving door open*) Get home early as you can. I'll need you. We gotta give Bruce a royal welcome.

DOC: Yes, Baby.

LOLA: Feeling all right?

DOC: Yes.

LOLA (*in doorway,* DOC *is on porch*): Take care of yourself.

DOC (*in a toneless voice*): Good-bye. (*He goes.*)

LOLA (*coming back to table with pleased expression, which changes to a puzzled look, calls to* MARIE): Now that's funny. Why did Doc take his raincoat? It's a beautiful day. There isn't a cloud in sight.

(*The Curtain Falls.*)

SCENE TWO

SCENE: *It is now 5:30. The scene is the same as the preceding except that more finishing touches have been added and the two women, still primping the table, lighting the tapers, are dressed in their best.* LOLA *is arranging the centerpiece.*

LOLA (*above table, fixing flowers*): I just love lilacs, don't you, Marie? (*Takes one and studies it*) Mrs. Coffman was nice; she let me have all I wanted. (*Looks at it very closely*) Aren't they pretty? And they smell so sweet. I think they're the nicest flower there is.

MARIE: They don't last long.

LOLA (*respectfully*): No. Just a few days. Mrs. Coffman's started blooming just day before yesterday.

MARIE: By the first of the week they'll all be gone.

LOLA: Vanish . . . they'll vanish into thin air. (*Gayer now*) Here, honey, we have them to spare *now*. Put this in your hair. There. (MARIE *does*) Mrs. Coffman's been so nice lately. I didn't use to like her. Now where could Doc be? He promised he'd get here early. He didn't even come home for lunch.

MARIE (*gets two chairs from bedroom*): Mrs. Delaney, you're a peach to go to all this trouble.

LOLA (*gets salt and pepper*): Shoot, I'm gettin' more fun out of it than you are. Do you think Bruce is going to like us?

MARIE: If he doesn't, I'll never speak to him again.

LOLA (*eagerly*): I'm just dying to meet him. But I feel sorta bad I never got to do anything nice for Turk.

MARIE (*carefully prying*): Did . . . Doc ever say anything to you about Turk . . . and me?

LOLA: About Turk and you? No, honey. Why?

MARIE: I just wondered.

LOLA: What if Bruce finds out that you've been going with someone else?

MARIE: Bruce and I had a very businesslike understanding before I left for school that we weren't going to sit around lonely just because we were separated.

LOLA: Aren't you being kind of mean to Turk?

MARIE: I don't think so.

LOLA: How's he going to feel when Bruce comes?

MARIE: He may be sore for a little while, but he'll get over it.

LOLA: Won't he feel bad?

MARIE: He's had his eye on a pretty little Spanish girl in his history class for a long time. I like Turk, but he's not the marrying kind.

LOLA: No! Really? (LOLA, *with a look of sad wonder on her face, sits on arm of couch. It's been a serious disillusionment.*)

MARIE: What's the matter?

LOLA: I . . . I just felt kinda tired. (*Sharp buzzing of doorbell.* MARIE *runs to answer it.*)

MARIE: That must be Bruce. (*She skips to the mirror again, then to door*) Bruce!

BRUCE: How are you, sweetheart?

MARIE: Wonderful.

BRUCE: Did you get my wire?

MARIE: Sure.

BRUCE: You're looking swell.

MARIE: Thanks. What took you so long to get here?

BRUCE: Well, honey, I had to go to my hotel and take a bath.

MARIE: Bruce, this is Mrs. Delaney.

BRUCE (*now he gets the cozy quality out of his voice*): How do you do, ma'am?

LOLA: How d'ya do?

BRUCE: Marie has said some very nice things about you in her letters.

MARIE: Mrs. Delaney has fixed the grandest dinner for us.

BRUCE: Now that was to be my treat. I have a big expense account now, honey. I thought we could all go down to the hotel and have dinner there, and celebrate first with a few cocktails.

LOLA: Oh, we can have cocktails, too. Excuse me, just a minute. (*She hurries to the kitchen and starts looking for the whiskey.* BRUCE *kisses* MARIE.)

MARIE (*whispers*): Now, Bruce, she's been working on this dinner all day. She even cleaned the house for you.

BRUCE (*with a surveying look*): Did she?

MARIE: And Doc's joining us. You'll like Doc.

BRUCE: Honey, are we going to have to stay here the whole evening?

MARIE: We can't just eat and run. We'll get away as soon as we can.

BRUCE: I hope so. I got the raise, sweetheart. They're giving me new territory. (LOLA *is frantic in the kitchen, having found the bottle missing. She hurries back into the living room.*)

LOLA: You kids are going to have to entertain yourselves awhile 'cause I'm going to be busy in the kitchen. Why don't you turn on the radio, Marie? Get some dance music. I'll shut the door so . . . so I won't disturb you. (LOLA *does so, then goes to the telephone.*)

MARIE: Come and see my room, Bruce. I've fixed it up just darling. And I've got your picture in the prettiest frame right on my dresser.

(*They exit and their voices are heard from the bedroom while* LOLA *is phoning.*)

LOLA (*at the phone*): This is Mrs. Delaney. Is . . . Doc there? Well, then, is Ed Anderson there? Well, would you give me Ed Anderson's telephone number? You see, he sponsored Doc into the club and helped him . . . you know . . . and . . . and I was a little worried tonight. . . . Oh, thanks. Yes, I've got it. (*She writes down number*) Could you have Ed Anderson call me if he comes in? Thank you. (*She hangs up. On her face is a dismal expression of fear, anxiety and doubt. She searches flour bin, icebox, closet. Then she goes into the living room, calling to* MARIE *and* BRUCE *as she comes*) I . . . I guess we'll go ahead without Doc, Marie.

MARIE (*enters from her room*): What's the matter with Doc, Mrs. Delaney?

LOLA: Well . . . he got held up at the office . . . just one of those things, you know. It's too bad. It would have to happen when I needed him most.

MARIE: Sure you don't need any help?

LOLA: Huh? Oh, no. I'll make out. Everything's ready. I tell you what I'm going to do. Three's a crowd, so I'm going to be the butler and serve the dinner to you two young lovebirds (*The telephone rings*) Pardon me . . . pardon me for just a minute. (*She rushes to phone, closing the door behind her*) Hello? Ed? Have you seen Doc? He went out this morning and hasn't come back. We're having company for dinner and he was supposed to be home early. . . . That's not all. This time we've had a quart of whiskey in the kitchen and Doc's never gone near it. I went to get it tonight. I was going to serve some cocktails. It was *gone*. Yes, I saw it there yesterday. No, I don't think so. . . . He said this morning he had an upset stomach but. . . . Oh, would you? . . . Thank you, Mr. Anderson. Thank you a million times. And you let me know when you find out anything. Yes, I'll be here . . . yes. (*Hangs up and crosses back to living room*) Well, I guess we're all ready.

BRUCE: Aren't you going to look at your present?

MARIE: Oh, sure, let's get some scissors. (*Their voices continue in bedroom.*)

MARIE (*enters with* BRUCE): Mrs. Delaney, we think you should eat with us.

LOLA: Oh, no, honey, I'm not very hungry. Besides, this is the first time you've been together in months and I think you should be alone. Marie, why don't you light the candles? Then we'll have just the right atmosphere. (*She goes into kitchen, gets tomato-juice glasses from icebox while* BRUCE *lights the candles.*)

BRUCE: Do we have to eat by candlelight? I won't be able to see. (LOLA *returns.*)

LOLA: Now, Bruce, you sit here. (*He and* MARIE *sit*) Isn't that going to be cozy? Dinner for two. Sorry we won't have time for cocktails. Let's have a little music.

(*She turns on the radio and a Viennese waltz swells up as the curtain falls with* LOLA *looking at the young people eating.*)

SCENE THREE

SCENE: *Funereal atmosphere. It is about 5:30 the next morning. The sky is just beginning to get light outside, while inside the room the shadows still cling heavily to the corners. The remains of last night's dinner clutter the table in the living room. The candles have guttered down to stubs amid the dirty dinner plates, and the lilacs in the centerpiece have wilted.* LOLA *is sprawled on the davenport, sleeping. Slowly she awakens and regards the morning light. She gets up and looks about strangely, beginning to show despair for the situation she is in. She wears the same spiffy dress she had on the night before but it is wrinkled now, and her marcelled coiffure is awry. One silk stocking has twisted loose and falls around her ankle. When she is sufficiently awake to realize her situation, she rushes to the telephone and dials a number.*

LOLA (*at telephone. She sounds frantic*): Mr. Anderson? Mr. Anderson, this is Mrs. Delaney again. I'm sorry to call you so early, but I just *had* to. . . . Did you find Doc? . . . No, he's not home yet. I don't suppose he'll come home till he's drunk all he can hold and wants to sleep. . . . I don't know what else to think, Mr. Anderson. I'm scared, Mr. Anderson. I'm awful scared. Will you come right over? . . . Thanks, Mr. Anderson. (*She hangs up and goes to kitchen to make coffee. She finds some left from the night before, so turns on the fire to warm it up. She wanders around vaguely, trying to get her thoughts in order, jumping at every sound. Pours herself a cup of coffee, then takes it to living room, sits and sips it. Very quietly* DOC *enters through the back way into the kitchen. He carries a big bottle of whiskey which he carefully places back in the pantry, not making a sound, hangs up overcoat, then puts suitcoat on back of chair. Starts to go upstairs. But* LOLA *speaks*) Doc? That you, Doc? (*Then* DOC *quietly walks in from kitchen. He is staggering drunk, but he is managing for a few minutes to appear as though he were perfectly sober and nothing had happened. His steps, however, are not too sure and his eyes are like blurred ink spots.* LOLA *is too frightened to talk. Her mouth is gaping and she is breathless with fear.*)

DOC: Good morning, honey.

LOLA: Doc! You all right?

DOC: The morning paper here? I wanta see the morning paper.

LOLA: Doc, we don't get a morning paper. *You* know that.

DOC: Oh, then I suppose I'm drunk or something. That what you're trying to say?

LOLA: No, Doc. . . .

DOC: Then give me the morning paper.

LOLA (*scampering to get last night's paper from console table*): Sure, Doc. Here it is. Now you just sit there and be quiet.

DOC (*resistance rising*): Why shouldn't I be quiet?

LOLA: Nothin', Doc. . . .

DOC (*has trouble unfolding paper. He places it before his face in order not to be seen. But he is too blind even to see*): Nothing, Doc. (*Mockingly.*)

LOLA (*cautiously, after a few minutes' silence*): Doc, are you all right?

DOC: Of course, I'm all right. Why shouldn't I be all right?

LOLA: Where you been?

DOC: What's it your business where I been? I been to London to see the Queen. What do you think of that? (*Apparently she doesn't know what to think of it*) Just let me alone. That's all I ask. I'm all right.

LOLA (*whimpering*): Doc, what made you do it? You said you'd be home last night . . . 'cause we were having company. Bruce was here and I had a big dinner fixed . . . and you never came. What was the matter, Doc?

DOC (*mockingly*): We had a big dinner for *Bruce.*

LOLA: Doc, it was for you, too.

DOC: Well . . . I don't want it.

LOLA: Don't get mad, Doc.

DOC (*threateningly*): Where's Marie?

LOLA: I don't know, Doc. She didn't come in last night. She was out with Bruce.

DOC (*back to audience*): I suppose you tucked them in bed together and peeked through the keyhole and applauded.

LOLA (*sickened*): Doc, don't talk that way. Bruce is a nice boy. They're gonna get married.

DOC: He probably *has* to marry her, the poor bastard. Just 'cause she's pretty and he got amorous one day. . . . Just like I had to marry *you.*

LOLA: Oh, Doc!

DOC: You and Marie are both a couple of sluts.

LOLA: Doc, please don't talk like that.

DOC: What are you good for? You can't even get up in the morning and cook my breakfast.

LOLA (*mumbling*): I will, Doc. I will after this.

DOC: You won't even sweep the floors, till some bozo comes along to make love to Marie, and then you fix things up like Buckingham Palace or a Chinese whorehouse with perfume on the lampbulbs, and flowers, and the gold-trimmed china *my mother* gave us. We're not going to use these any more. My mother didn't buy those dishes for whores to eat off of. (*He jerks the cloth off the table, sending the dishes rattling to the floor.*)

LOLA: Doc! Look what you done.

DOC: Look what I *did*, not *done*. I'm going to get me a drink. (*Goes to kitchen.*)

LOLA (*follows to platform*): Oh, no, Doc! You know what it does to you!

DOC: You're damn right I know what it does to me. It makes me willing to come home here and look at you, you two-ton old heifer! (*Takes a long swallow*) There! And pretty soon I'm going to have another, then another.

LOLA (*with dread*): Oh, Doc! (LOLA *takes phone.* DOC *sees this, rushes for the butcher-knife from kitchen-cabinet drawer. Not finding it, he gets a hatchet from the back porch*) Mr. Anderson? Come quick, Mr. Anderson. He's back. He's *back!* He's got a hatchet!

DOC: God damn you! Get away from that telephone. (*He chases her into living room where she gets the couch between them*) That's right, phone! Tell the world I'm drunk. Tell the whole damn world. Scream your head off, you fat slut. Holler till all the neighbors think I'm beatin' hell outuv you. Where's Bruce now—under Marie's bed? You got all fresh and pretty for him, didn't you? Combed your hair for once—you even washed the back of your neck and put on a girdle. You were willing to harness all that fat into one bundle.

LOLA (*about to faint under the weight of the crushing accusations*): Doc, don't say any more. . . . I'd rather you hit me with an axe, Doc. . . . Honest I would. But I can't stand to hear you talk like that.

DOC: I oughta hack off all that fat, and then wait for Marie and chop off those pretty ankles she's always dancing around on . . . then start lookin' for Turk and fix him too.

LOLA: Daddy, you're talking crazy!

DOC: I'm making sense for the first time in my life. You didn't know I knew about it, did you? But I saw him coming outa there, I saw him. You knew about it all the time and thought you were hidin' something. . . .

LOLA: Daddy, I didn't know anything about it at all. Honest, Daddy.

DOC: Then *you're* the one that's crazy, if you think I didn't know. You were running a regular house, weren't you? It's probably been going on for years, ever since we were married. (*He lunges for her. She breaks for kitchen. They struggle in front of sink.*)

LOLA: Doc, it's not so; it's not so. You gotta believe me, Doc.

DOC: You're lyin'. But none a that's gonna happen any more. I'm gonna fix you now, once and for all. . . .

LOLA: Doc . . . don't do that to me. (LOLA, *in a frenzy of fear, clutches him around the neck holding arm with axe by his side*)

Remember, Doc. It's *me*, Lola! You said I was the prettiest girl you ever saw. Remember, Doc! It's me! Lola!

DOC (*the memory has overpowered him. He collapses, slowly mumbling*): Lola . . . my pretty Lola. (*He passes out on the floor.* LOLA *stands now, as though in a trance. Quietly* MRS. COFFMAN *comes creeping in through the back way.*)

MRS. COFFMAN (*calling softly*): Mrs. Delaney! (LOLA *doesn't even hear.* MRS. COFFMAN *comes in*) Mrs. Delaney! Here you are, Lady. I heard screaming and I was frightened for you.

LOLA: I . . . I'll be all right . . . some men are comin' pretty soon; everything'll be all right.

MRS. COFFMAN: I'll stay until they get here.

LOLA (*feeling a sudden need*): Would you . . . would you *please*, Mrs. Coffman? (*Breaks into sobs.*)

MRS. COFFMAN: Of course, Lady. (*Regarding* DOC) The doctor got "sick" again?

LOLA (*mumbling*): Some men . . . 'll be here pretty soon. . . .

MRS. COFFMAN: I'll try to straighten things up before they get here. . . .

(*She rights chair, hangs up telephone and picks up the axe, which she is holding when Ed Anderson and Elmo Huston enter unannounced. They are experienced AA's. Neatly dressed businessmen approaching middle age.*)

ED: Pardon us for walking right in, Mrs. Delaney, but I didn't want to waste a second. (*Kneels by* DOC.)

LOLA (*weakly*): It's all right. . . .

(*Both men observe* DOC *on the floor, and their expressions hold understanding mixed with a feeling of irony. There is even a slight smile of irony on* ED'S *face. They have developed the surgeon's objectivity.*)

ED: Where is the hatchet? (*To* ELMO *as though appraising* DOC'S *condition*) What do you think, Elmo?

ELMO: We can't leave him here if he's gonna play around with hatchets.

ED: Give me a hand, Elmo. We'll get him to sit up and then try to talk some sense into him. (*They struggle with the lumpy body,* DOC *grunting his resistance*) Come on, Doc, old boy. It's Ed and Elmo. We're going to take care of you. (*They seat him at table.*)

DOC (*through a thick fog*): Lemme alone.

ED: Wake up. We're taking you away from here.

DOC: Lemme 'lone, God damn it. (*Falls forward, head on table.*)

ELMO (*to* MRS. COFFMAN): Is there any coffee?

MRS. COFFMAN: I think so, I'll see. (*Goes to stove with cup from drainboard. Lights fire under coffee and waits for it to get heated.*)

ED: He's way beyond coffee.

ELMO: It'll help some. Get something hot into his stomach.

ED: If we could get him to eat. How 'bout some hot food, Doc? (DOC *gestures and they don't push the matter.*)

ELMO: City Hospital, Ed?

ED: I guess that's what it will have to be.

LOLA: Where you going to take him? (ELMO *goes to phone; speaks quietly to City Hospital.*)

ED: Don't know; wanta talk to him first.

MRS. COFFMAN (*coming in with the coffee*): Here's the coffee.

ED (*taking cup*): Hold him, Elmo, while I make him swallow this.

ELMO: Come on, Doc, drink your coffee. (DOC *only blubbers.*)

DOC (*after the coffee is down*): Uh . . . what . . . what's goin' on here?

ED: It's me, Doc. Your old friend Ed. I got Elmo with me.

DOC (*twisting his face painfully*): Get out, both of you. Lemme 'lone.

ED (*with certainty*): We're takin' you with us, Doc.

DOC: Hell you are. I'm all right. I just had a little slip. We all have slips. . . .

ED: Sometimes, Doc, but we gotta get over 'em.

DOC: I'll be O.K. Just gimme a day to sober up. I'll be as good as new.

ED: Remember the last time, Doc? You said you'd be all right in the morning and we found you with a broken collar bone. Come on.

DOC: Boys, I'll be all right. Now lemme alone.

ED: How much has he had, Mrs. Delaney?

LOLA: I don't know. He had a quart when he left here yesterday and he didn't get home till now.

ED: He's probably been through a *couple* of quarts. He's been dry for a long time. It's going to hit him pretty hard. Yah, he'll be a pretty sick man for a few days. (*Louder to* DOC, *as though he were talking to a deaf man*) Wanta go to the City Hospital, Doc?

DOC (*this has a sobering effect on him. He looks about him furtively for possible escape*): No . . . no, boys. Don't take me there. That's a torture chamber. No, Ed. You wouldn't do that to me.

ED: They'll sober you up.

DOC: Ed, I been there; I've seen the place. That's where they take the crazy people. You can't do that to me, Ed.

ED: Well, *you're* crazy, aren't you? Goin' after your wife with a hatchet.

(*They lift* DOC *to his feet.* DOC *looks with dismal pleading in his eyes at* LOLA, *who has her face in her hands.*)

DOC (*so plaintive, a sob in his voice*): Honey! Honey! (LOLA *can't*

look at him. Now DOC *tries to make a getaway, bolting blindly into the living room before the two men catch him and hold him in front of living room table*) Honey, don't let 'em take me there. They'll believe *you.* Tell 'em you won't *let* me take a drink.

LOLA: Isn't there any place else you could take him?

ED: Private sanitariums cost a lotta dough.

LOLA: I got forty dollars in the kitchen.

ED: That won't be near enough.

DOC: I'll be at the meeting tomorrow night sober as you are now.

ED (*to* LOLA): All the king's horses couldn't keep him from takin' another drink now, Mrs. Delaney. He got himself into this; he's gotta sweat it out.

DOC: I won't go to the City Hospital. That's where they take the crazy people. (*Stumbles into chair.*)

ED (*using all his patience now*): Look, Doc. Elmo and I are your friends. You know that. Now if you don't come along peacefully, we're going to call the cops and you'll have to wear off this jag in the cooler. How'd you like that? (DOC *is as though stunned*) The important thing is for you to get sober.

DOC: I don't wanta go.

ED: The City Hospital or the City Jail. Take your choice. We're not going to leave you here. Come on, Elmo. (*They grab hold of him.*)

DOC (*has collected himself and now given in*): O.K., boys. Gimme another drink and I'll go.

LOLA: Oh, no, Doc.

ED: Might as well humor him, ma'am. Another few drinks couldn't make much difference now. (MRS. COFFMAN *runs for bottle and glass in pantry and comes right back with them. She hands them to* LOLA) O.K., Doc, we're goin' to give you a drink. Take a good one; it's gonna be your last for a long, long time to come. (ED *takes the bottle, removes the cork and gives* DOC *a glass of whiskey.* DOC *takes his*

fill, straight, coming up once or twice for air. Then ED *takes the bottle from him and hands it to* LOLA. *To* LOLA) They'll keep him three or four days, Mrs. Delaney; then he'll be home again, good as new. (*Modestly*) I . . . I don't want to pry into personal affairs, ma'am . . . but he'll need you then, pretty bad. . . . Come on, Doc. Let's go.

(ED *has a hold of* DOC's *coat sleeve trying to maneuver him. A faraway look is in* DOC's *eyes, a dazed look containing panic and fear. He gets to his feet.*)

DOC (*struggling to sound reasonable*): Just a minute, boys. . . .

ED: What's the matter?

DOC: I . . . I wanta glass of water.

ED: You'll get a glass of water later. Come on.

DOC (*beginning to twist a little in* ED's *grasp*): . . . a glass of water . . . that's all. . . . (*One furious, quick twist of his body and he eludes* ED.)

ED: Quick, Elmo.

(ELMO *acts fast and they get* DOC *before he gets away. Then* DOC *struggles with all his might, kicking and screaming like a pampered child.* ED *and* ELMO *holding him tightly to usher him out.*)

DOC (*as he is led out*): Don't let 'em take me there. Don't take me there. Stop them, somebody. Stop them. That's where they take the crazy people. Oh, God, stop them, somebody. Stop them.

(LOLA *looks on blankly while* ED *and* ELMO *depart with* DOC. *Now there are several moments of deep silence.*)

MRS. COFFMAN (*clears up. Very softly*): Is there anything more I can do for you now, Mrs. Delaney?

LOLA: I guess not.

MRS. COFFMAN (*puts a hand on* LOLA's *shoulder*): Get busy, Lady. Get busy and forget it.

LOLA: Yes . . . I'll get busy right away. Thanks, Mrs. Coffman.

MRS. COFFMAN: I better go. I've got to make breakfast for the children. If you want me for anything, let me know.

LOLA: Yes . . . yes . . . good-bye, Mrs. Coffman. (MRS. COFFMAN *exits.* LOLA *is too exhausted to move from the big chair. At first she can't even cry; then the tears come slowly, softly. In a few moments* BRUCE *and* MARIE *enter, bright and merry.* LOLA *turns her head slightly to regard them as creatures from another planet.*)

MARIE (*springing into room.* BRUCE *follows*): Congratulate me, Mrs. Delaney.

LOLA: Huh?

MARIE: We're going to be married.

LOLA: Married? (*It barely registers.*)

MARIE (*showing ring*): Here it is. My engagement ring. (MARIE *and* BRUCE *are too engrossed in their own happiness to notice* LOLA'S *stupor.*)

LOLA: That's lovely . . . lovely.

MARIE: We've had the most wonderful time. We danced all night and then drove out to the lake and saw the sun rise.

LOLA: That's nice.

MARIE: We've made all our plans. I'm quitting school and flying back to Cincinnati with Bruce this afternoon. His mother has invited me to visit them before I go home. Isn't that wonderful?

LOLA: Yes . . . yes, indeed.

MARIE: Going to miss me?

LOLA: Yes, of course, Marie. We'll miss you very much . . . uh . . . congratulations.

MARIE: Thanks, Mrs. Delaney. (*Goes to bedroom door*) Come on, Bruce, help me get my stuff. (*To* LOLA) Mrs. Delaney, would you throw everything into a big box and send it to me at home? We haven't had breakfast yet. We're going down to the hotel and celebrate.

BRUCE: I'm sorry we're in such a hurry, but we've got a taxi waiting. (*They go into room.*)

LOLA (*goes to telephone, dials*): Long distance? I want to talk to Green Valley 223. Yes. This is Delmar 1887. (*She hangs up.* MARIE *comes from bedroom, followed by* BRUCE, *who carries suitcase.*)

MARIE: Mrs. Delaney, I sure hate to say good-bye to you. You've been so wonderful to me. But Bruce says I can come and visit you once in a while, didn't you, Bruce?

BRUCE: Sure thing.

LOLA: You're going?

MARIE: We're going downtown and have our breakfast, then do a little shopping and catch our plane. And thanks for everything, Mrs. Delaney.

BRUCE: It was very nice of you to have us to dinner.

LOLA: Dinner? Oh, don't mention it.

MARIE (*to* LOLA): There isn't much time for good-bye now, but I just want you to know Bruce and I wish you the best of everything. You and Doc both. Tell Doc good-bye for me, will you, and remember I think you're both a coupla peaches.

BRUCE: Hurry, honey.

MARIE: 'Bye, Mrs. Delaney! (*She goes out.*)

BRUCE: 'Bye, Mrs. Delaney. Thanks for being nice to my girl. (*He goes out and off porch with* MARIE.)

LOLA (*waves. The phone rings. She goes to it quickly*): Hello. Hello, Mom. It's Lola, Mom. How are you? Mom, Doc's sick again. Do you think Dad would let me come home for a while? I'm awfully unhappy, Mom. Do you think . . . just till I made up my mind? . . . All right. No, I guess it wouldn't do any good for you to come here. . . . I . . . I'll let you know what I decide to do. That's all, Mom. Thanks. Tell Daddy hello. (*She hangs up.*)

(*The Curtain Falls.*)

SCENE FOUR

SCENE: *It is morning, a week later. The house is neat again.* LOLA *is dusting in the living room as* MRS. COFFMAN *enters.*

MRS. COFFMAN: Mrs. Delaney! Good morning, Mrs. Delaney.

LOLA: Come in, Mrs. Coffman.

MRS. COFFMAN (*coming in*): It's a fine day for the games. I've got a box lunch ready, and I'm taking all the kids to the Stadium. My boy's got a ticket for you, too. You better get dressed and come with us.

LOLA: Thanks, Mrs. Coffman, but I've got work to do.

MRS. COFFMAN: But it's a big day. The Spring Relays. . . . All the athletes from the colleges are supposed to be there.

LOLA: Oh, yes. You know that boy, Turk, who used to come here to see Marie—he's one of the big stars.

MRS. COFFMAN: Is that so? Come on . . . do. We've got a ticket for you. . . .

LOLA: Oh, no, I have to stay here and clean up the house. Doc may be coming home today. I talked to him on the phone. He wasn't sure what time they'd let him out, but I wanta have the place all nice for him.

MRS. COFFMAN: Well, I'll tell you all about it when I come home. Everybody and his brother will be there.

LOLA: Have a good time.

MRS. COFFMAN: 'Bye, Mrs. Delaney.

LOLA: 'Bye.

(MRS. COFFMAN *leaves, and* LOLA *goes into kitchen. The mailman comes onto porch and leaves a letter, but* LOLA *doesn't even know he's there. Then the milkman knocks on the kitchen door.*)

LOLA: Come in.

MILKMAN (*entering with armful of bottles, etc.*): I see you checked the list, lady. You've got a lot of extras.

LOLA: Yah—I think my husband's coming home.

MILKMAN (*he puts the supplies on table, then pulls out magazine*): Remember, I told you my picture was going to appear in *Strength and Health.* (*Showing her magazine*) Well, see that pile of muscles? That's me.

LOLA: My goodness. You got your picture in a magazine.

MILKMAN: Yes, ma'am. See what it says about my chest development? For the greatest self-improvement in a three months' period.

LOLA: Goodness sakes. You'll be famous, won't you?

MILKMAN: If I keep busy on these barbells. I'm working now for "muscular separation."

LOLA: That's nice.

MILKMAN (*cheerily*): Well, good day, ma'am.

LOLA: You forgot your magazine.

MILKMAN: That's for you. (*Exits.* LOLA *puts away the supplies in the icebox. Then* DOC *comes in the front door, carrying the little suitcase she previously packed for him. His quiet manner and his serious demeanor are the same as before.* LOLA *is shocked by his sudden appearance. She jumps and can't help showing her fright.*)

LOLA: Docky! (*Without thinking she assumes an attitude of fear.* DOC *observes this and it obviously pains him.*)

DOC: Good morning, honey. (*Pause.*)

LOLA (*on platform*): Are . . . are you all right, Doc?

DOC: Yes, I'm all right. (*An awkward pause. Then* DOC *tries to reassure her*) Honest, I'm all right, honey. Please don't stand there like that . . . like I was gonna . . . gonna. . . .

LOLA (*tries to relax*): I'm sorry, Doc.

DOC: How you been?

LOLA: Oh, I been all right, Doc. Fine.

DOC: Any news?

LOLA: I told you about Marie—over the phone.

DOC: Yah.

LOLA: He was a very nice boy, Doc. Very nice.

DOC: That's good. I hope they'll be happy.

LOLA (*trying to sound bright*): She said . . . maybe she'd come back and visit us some time. That's what she *said.*

DOC (*pause*): It . . . it's good to be home.

LOLA: Is it, Daddy?

DOC: Yah. (*Beginning to choke up, just a little.*)

LOLA: Did everything go all right . . . I mean . . . did they treat you well and . . . ?

DOC (*now loses control of his feelings. Tears in his eyes, he all but lunges at her, gripping her arms, drilling his head into her bosom*): Honey, don't ever leave me. *Please* don't ever leave me. If you do, they'd have to keep me down at that place all the time. I don't know what I said to you or what I did, I can't remember hardly anything. But please forgive me . . . please . . . please. . . . And I'll try to make everything up.

LOLA (*there is surprise on her face and new contentment. She becomes almost angelic in demeanor. Tenderly she places a soft hand on his head*): Daddy! Why, of course I'll never leave you. (*A smile of satisfaction*) You're all I've got. You're all I ever had. (*Very tenderly he kisses her.*)

DOC (*collecting himself now.* LOLA *sits beside* DOC): I . . . I feel better . . . already.

LOLA (*almost gay*): So do I. Have you had your breakfast?

DOC: No. The food there was terrible. When they told me I could go this morning, I decided to wait and fix myself breakfast here.

LOLA (*happily*): Come on out in the kitchen and I'll get you a nice, big breakfast. I'll scramble some eggs and. . . . You see I've got the place all cleaned up just the way you like it. (DOC *goes to kitchen*) Now you sit down here and I'll get your fruit juice. (*He sits and she gets fruit juice from refrigerator*) I've got bacon this morning, too. My, it's expensive now. And I'll light the oven and make you some toast, and here's some orange marmalade, and. . . .

DOC (*with a new feeling of control*): Fruit juice. I'll need lots of fruit juice for a while. The doctor said it would restore the vitamins. You see, that damn whiskey kills all the vitamins in your system, eats up all the sugar in your kidneys. They came around every morning and shot vitamins in my arm. Oh, it didn't hurt. And the doctor told me to drink a quart of fruit juice every day. And you better get some candy bars for me at the grocery this morning. Doctor said to eat lots of candy, try to replace the sugar.

LOLA: I'll do that, Doc. Here's another glass of this pineapple juice now. I'll get some candy bars first thing.

DOC: The doctor said I should have a hobby. Said I should go out more. That's all that's wrong with me. I thought maybe I'd go hunting once in a while.

LOLA: Yes, Doc. And bring home lots of good things to eat.

DOC: I'll get a big bird dog, too. Would you like a sad-looking old bird dog around the house?

LOLA: Of course, I would. (*All her life and energy have been restored*) You know what, Doc? I had another dream last night.

DOC: About Little Sheba?

LOLA: Oh, it was about everyone and everything. (*In a raptured tone. She gets bacon from icebox and starts to cook it*) Marie and I were going to the Olympics back in our old high school stadium. There were thousands of people there. There was Turk out in the center of the field throwing the javelin. Every time he threw it, the crowd would roar . . . and you know who the man in charge was? It was my father. Isn't that funny? . . . But Turk kept changing into

someone else all the time. And then my father disqualified him. So he had to sit on the sidelines . . . and guess who took his place, Daddy? You! You came trotting out there on the field just as big as you please. . . .

DOC (*smilingly*): How did I do, Baby?

LOLA: Fine. You picked the javelin up real careful, like it was awful heavy. But you threw it, Daddy, clear, *clear* up into the sky. And it never came down again. (DOC *looks very pleased with himself.* LOLA *goes on*) Then it started to rain. And I couldn't find Little Sheba. I almost went crazy looking for her and there were so many people, I didn't even know where to look. And you were waiting to take me home. And we walked and walked through the slush and mud, and people were hurrying all around us and . . . and. . . . (*Leaves stove and sits. Sentimental tears come to her eyes*) But this part is sad, Daddy. All of a sudden I saw Little Sheba . . . she was lying in the middle of the field . . . dead. . . . It made me cry, Doc. No one paid any attention. . . . I cried and cried. It made me feel so bad, Daddy. That sweet little puppy . . . her curly white fur was smeared with mud, and no one to stop and take care of her. . . .

DOC: Why couldn't *you?*

LOLA: I wanted to, but you wouldn't let me. You kept saying, "We can't stay here, honey; we must go on. We gotta go on." (*Pause*) Now, isn't that strange?

DOC: Dreams are funny.

LOLA: I don't think Little Sheba's ever coming back, Doc. I'm not going to call her any more.

DOC: Not much point in it, Baby. I guess she's gone for good.

LOLA: I'll fix your eggs.

(*She gets up, embraces* DOC, *and goes to stove.* DOC *remains at table sipping his fruit juice. The curtain comes slowly down.*)

Come Back, Little Sheba brought forth extraordinarily mixed reactions from the Broadway critics; in fact, Inge, in replying to them, called his play "the Schizophrenic Wonder." The playwright's remarks are of interest to us here, not because they are the "correct interpretation" of his play, but because they provide insight into his original intentions and his own reading of the play. Nonetheless, his justifications must be examined in relation to the final effect he achieved and not according to what he may have wanted to accomplish as he wrote the play.

Inge says that

> *Come Back, Little Sheba* is a play about a couple passing into middle age, dimly wondering where their youthful happiness has gone, looking tentatively in the future for something to replace it. But even Lola's youth was unfulfilled. Someone always stood between her and a fully realized happiness. She met Doc when he went to college. They had a courtship that lasted almost a year and for the first time they both found they could sing and dance and laugh and make love like other young people. Then their new-found joy caught up with them and trapped them into a necessary marriage, forcing them into adjustments neither was equipped to make. Youth to Lola was a song that ended before she had quite learned the tune. Youth to Doc was a snare that tore him away from the straight, upward path to a future of security and respect. When Marie, a young college girl, rents a room in their house, youth is again in their midst. Doc sees in her the embodiment of all the high and perhaps false spiritual ideals he holds so dear in young womanhood, not because Marie possesses these qualities, but because he manufactures them for her. And Lola wants to live vicariously in Marie the youth she missed. She regards the girl somewhat more realistically than Doc, but neither of them is prepared to experience youth today. The casual, candid way Marie and Turk, the young athlete, accept a relation that is purely physical comes as a shock to the elders. Both finally are brought to their senses. Doc gets maniacally drunk and Lola almost loses her life. Then something happens inside them; they realize their dependence on each other; their love has made its first entrance into maturity . . . .[1]

These remarks are not simply a brief paraphrase of the plot; they raise a fundamental question — the structural relationship of the main plot to the subplot. Some critics have argued that the Marie-Turk situation is largely irrelevant and contrived, that when

[1] William Inge, "The Schizophrenic Wonder," *Theatre Arts,* XXXIV (May 1950), 22.

Inge turns to his secondary triangle his play loses its central focus. On the other hand, it might be argued that the subplot acts as a kind of catalyst for the main plot. Doc's violent explosion after a year of self-control comes about because of Marie's conduct, although the motivation goes much deeper, as Inge points out. Moreover, both Doc and Lola see in Marie a vision of their own dead child and the life that might have been: "If we'd had the baby she'd be a young girl now; then maybe you'd have *saved* your money, Doc, and she could be going to college – like Marie" (p. 127).

Doc's answer to Lola – "Baby, what's done is done" – is a theme which reverberates throughout the play: the simple, but at times almost stoical, acceptance of life as it is – Doc's only faith. First heard in the quiet prayer of the Alcoholics Anonymous, it is repeated with gentle pathos a few moments later when Doc tells Lola, "The important thing is to forget the past and live for the present. And stay sober doing it" (p. 100). After the terrifying explosion which dramatizes the desperate tensions hidden under this apparent calm and gives the banality of Doc's beliefs a painful reality, the theme appears again in the final moments of the play, symbolically distorted in Lola's dream: "We must go on. We gotta go on" (p. 166). But here, as at other crucial moments, Inge has organically related his subplot and main plot, for Act One ironically closes on the same note upon which the play begins and ends: "Tonight," says Turk, "will never come again" (p. 138). What is the difference in tone between Turk's remark and Doc's? What does Inge mean when he writes, "This is true"? How does the ending of Act One sharpen the disparity between the two plots?

On superficial reading *Come Back, Little Sheba* might appear to be only a kind of naturalistic recording of tawdry, humdrum lives on another Midwestern Main Street. But the dramatist is not simply transcribing a series of realistic incidents; in Inge's hands the material has been molded into an artistic form which is the dramatic structure of his play. Inge, however, has been accused of writing a drama which is structurally weak. He has attempted to explain the artistic necessity for the particular development of his drama in this manner:

> Some objections have been made that the slow first act of *Come Back, Little Sheba* was indicative of the play's weak structure. This struck me as a somewhat arbitrary requirement to build the elements of the play, not according to the form most natural to them, but according to a form that has served perhaps far too many other Broadway plays. Form, to me, is the shape any creative work must take in order to exist with its ultimate force, beauty, and meaning. If the first act of *Sheba* moved more swiftly, more predictably, and with more indication of what is to

come, Doc's outburst would not be the revelation it is. I feel that the audience, when Doc makes his drunken attack on Lola, should be shocked into incredibility, and then after a second's pause come to the realization it had to be.

I remember once being in a tornado. It came like a blast after a morning of unnatural quiet in the atmosphere . . . . No one could interpret this atmosphere, but people in the community felt that something was going to happen. That is the atmosphere I wanted to create in my play: a slow, slightly suspenseful prelude to the eruption of a man's despair.[2]

One might elaborate upon Inge's commentary on the dramatic development of *Come Back, Little Sheba.* There is in the play an underlying structural pattern or rhythm which we have already seen in the ironic echoing of Doc's statement of his code. The drama begins and ends with Lola's discussing her dreams about Little Sheba. It is the differences in the dreams, however, that Inge is concerned with, for they provide a measure of Lola's new awareness. Inge has said that he is not primarily concerned with the scientific or psychological credibility of these dreams, but with their dramatic function. What is the distinction that he is making here?

Dramatic structure is thus more than the division of a play into a number of acts; it is the significant ordering of the dramatic events. The fact that *Come Back, Little Sheba* has three breakfast scenes might at first seem to be only dramatic economy: the playwright's keen awareness of the financial cost of mounting an elaborate production with frequent changes of scenery. It is when we realize, however, that these breakfast scenes are meaningfully placed at the beginning of the first and second acts and at the end of the play that their full significance becomes clear. What would be artistically wrong, say, if the play concluded with Lola and Doc reunited in the living room after lunch? How do the differences in the three scenes help to develop the emotional impact of the drama? How do these scenes also contribute to Inge's theme, which, he says, might in part be summarized by Thoreau's famous observation "The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation"?

The ending caused considerable perplexity to the Broadway critics on opening night, but upon it depends much of one's final reading of the drama. George Jean Nathan, the dean of Broadway critics, wrote that *Come Back, Little Sheba* is

. . . an exceptionally sincere and honest work, at least up to its final scene, which has the appearance of a piece of candy dropped into its tragic pattern superficially to sweeten things a little for the box-office. Yet even here the author makes the candy on the bitter-chocolate side,

[2] *Ibid.,* p. 23.

since a moment's reflection assures one that the reunion of the husband who has tried to drown his adversity and disillusion in drink and the once desirable wife whose innate commonness has made her intolerable to him must be transitory and end only in perpetuated tragedy.[3]

Robert Hatch, however, took a quite different point of view:

One might complain that there is a frustrating inconclusiveness to the play. It builds to a brutal explosion, but when the air clears we find that very little rock has been shifted. Doc Delaney, the trapped boozer, and his pathetic slattern of a wife tell each other that a new day is coming, that they have faced down their dead youth and can now go on together. Nevertheless, they have nowhere to go and the best they can hope for from each other is forebearance. Perhaps Inge is right to leave it at that; he has at least the statistical probability on his side. But it can be argued that in art, tragedy should be resolved, even though we admit that in life it is customarily evaded.[4]

To what extent does the playwright agree with either of his critics?

The ending is not a hopeless one by any means; I think there is cheer in Doc and Lola's sitting together at the kitchen table, coming to a new realization, after their near catastrophe, of their need for each other; coming perhaps to some shadowy realization of a possible new life together. Doc may or may not go on another binge; it is impossible to make predictions. I, for one, find it very easy to believe he will not. After all, he has given his life some shape, even though he seeks at times to destroy that shape; and he has established certain values and ideals it satisfies him to live up to. As for Lola, she is certainly as well off having fun with the postman and the milkman as she would be at bridge parties and teas. If she keeps a messy house, that is strictly her business and Doc doesn't seem to mind seriously. Their lives are not radiant with happiness and achievement, but they have found together a way to survive . . . .[5]

Inge does not clash with his critics here solely over matters of detail; at issue is the question whether *Come Back, Little Sheba* should be considered a tragedy. Hatch calls it a tragedy and bases his criticism on that assumption; Nathan refers, in a somewhat different sense, to the tragedy in the play. Inge's response is forthright:

Of course, *Sheba* is not a tragedy . . . . One reviewer called it a "pathetic comedy" and I feel this is a happy classification. I felt that I was writing a comedy, hoping others would find it a rather lyrical play full of pathos, humor, melancholy, warmth, affection, and absurdity, with one painful stab of insight into a man's regret . . . .

Certainly, poor Doc and Lola could never begin to measure up to the proportions of tragic heroes . . . . I found them lovable, weak, warm-

[3] George Jean Nathan, *The Theatre Book of the Year, 1949-1950* (New York, 1950), p. 233.
[4] Robert Hatch, *Theatre Arts,* XXXVI (December 1952), 29.
[5] Inge, p. 23.

> hearted, foolish, naive, a little pretentious, and only occasionally brave. . . . Doc and Lola are people the world was never aware of, but the world's ignorance doesn't make them any the more or less interesting and ligable as human beings . . . .[6]

Clearly *Come Back, Little Sheba* is not a tragedy like those of the ancient Greeks in which the tragic hero was guilty of *hubris* — arrogance — in violating the divine will of the gods, thus bringing about his own destruction. Nor is Inge's play in the tradition of Elizabethan and Shakespearean tragedy, in which the emphasis shifts from the hero's conflict with an external Destiny to his conflict with facets of his own character (his "tragic flaw," as it has been called), or with other men.

Rather than emphasizing the humanistic concern for man's free will, modern tragedy more often concentrates upon man's struggle with the forces of heredity and environment. Both Greek and Elizabethan tragedy had as protagonist a man of heroic stature whose defeat meant not only his own self-destruction but somehow involved the fate of all mankind, so that the audience, identifying itself with the hero, might well say with pity and terror, "If a man of such strength of character can be destroyed, what hope is there for me?" or "There but for the grace of God go I." But any tragedy involves the hero's coming to realize his own responsibility for his defeat, thus gaining new insight into his moral nature. Tragedy must have ethical or moral significance; in a sense, the whole moral order of the universe should be involved in the fate of the tragic protagonist, and the outcome, although it may bring about his downfall or death, must seem to be just and inevitable.

Even though Inge insists that his play was not meant to be a tragedy, could it be argued that there are elements of tragedy in it, or at least elements of what we have termed "modern tragedy"? To what extent is *Come Back, Little Sheba* in no sense tragic? What is the total effect of Inge's combining a strain of the comic with the potentially tragic?

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 23.

QUESTIONS

1. Little Sheba never appears in the play, yet Inge entitles his work *Come Back, Little Sheba*. Why?
2. What other functions, besides those already discussed, are served by the Turk-Marie relationship?

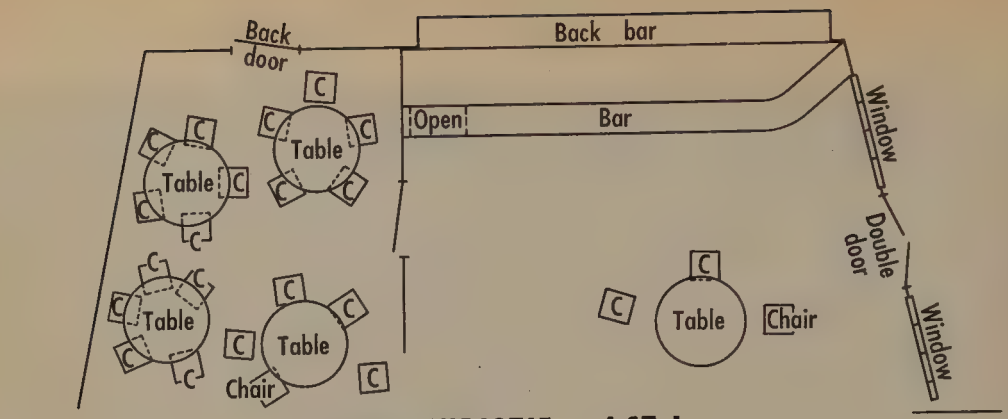
3. Although Inge does not stress the point, he does intimate that Lola's and Doc's childhoods have played a part in shaping their adult attitudes. Discuss the influence of Doc's mother and Lola's father.
4. The postman and the milkman have virtually no significance in the plot. Could their roles be omitted without loss to the play?
5. Early in Act Two, Scene Five, Doc tunes in on a radio rendition of Schubert's "Ave Maria." Wouldn't the same mood have been established if Inge had made it "The Lost Chord"? Why is "Ave Maria" more appropriate?
6. All through the play Inge makes full dramatic use of the radio. What effects are achieved by each of these programs: (a) "Taboo" (p. 114); (b) the sentimental dance band (p. 123); (c) the fox trot (p. 129); (d) the Viennese waltz (p. 150)?
7. The artistic unity of a play does not depend solely upon its dramatic structure or its character-relationships. Often the repetition throughout the play of an important word, phrase, image, or sentence may develop accretions of meaning that ironically play off against one another. This happens with Inge's use of the word "nice." The dramatist could easily have found synonyms, but by putting the same word into the mouths of his four leading characters in similar situations, he sharpens the disparity in values among his characters. Discuss the significance of Inge's use of "nice," referring to the specific bits of dialogue in which the word occurs.
8. Lola tells both Turk and the milkman that they ought to be out in Hollywood making Tarzan movies. Is this just Lola's ready remark whenever she sees muscles, or is Inge suggesting some kind of identification between the two men?
9. One of Lola's favorite expressions is "vanished into thin air." What effect does its repetition have on the tone of *Come Back, Little Sheba?* What insights does it provide into Lola's character? Does the reader's knowledge that she is unconsciously echoing a fragment from one of the most famous speeches in Shakespeare enhance the power of the phrase in its present context? See *The Tempest,* IV, i, 148 ff.
10. Richard Watts, Jr., drama critic of the New York *Post,* makes this adverse criticism of *Come Back, Little Sheba:*

    Unfortunately, the drama, despite its modest integrity, seems the outline of a play or perhaps a few scenes from it rather than the finished work itself. It begins with all the apparent materials of a complete evening in the theatre and then becomes so sparse in its writing and development that, for all the touching simplicity of its final episode, it ends by appearing curiously thin in its treatment. Never ceasing in being intelligent in what it has to say it simply isn't quite resourceful enough.

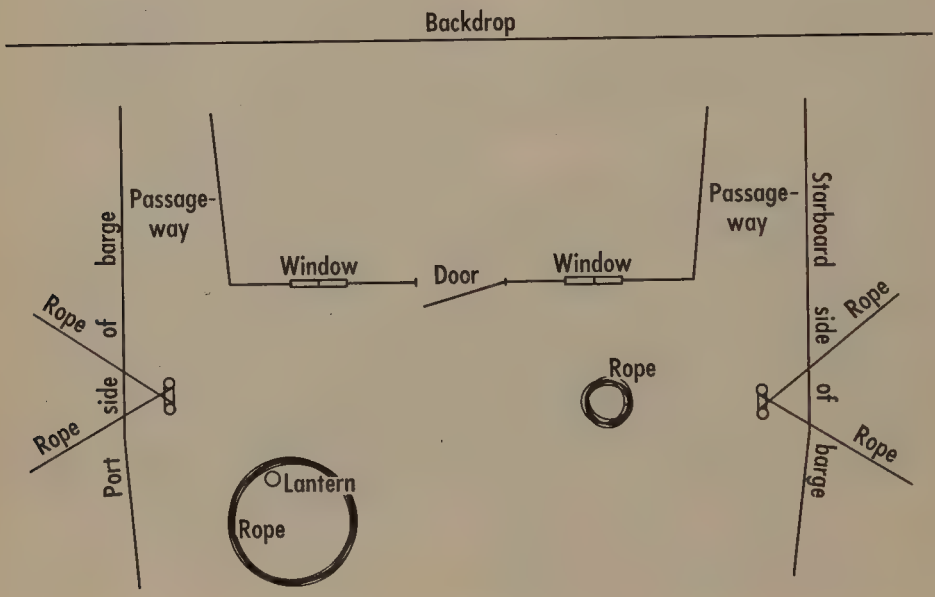
    Write a short essay defending or repudiating Watts' position. Use specific evidence from the play to establish your case.

EUGENE O'NEILL

ANNA CHRISTIE



ANNA CHRISTIE • ACT I



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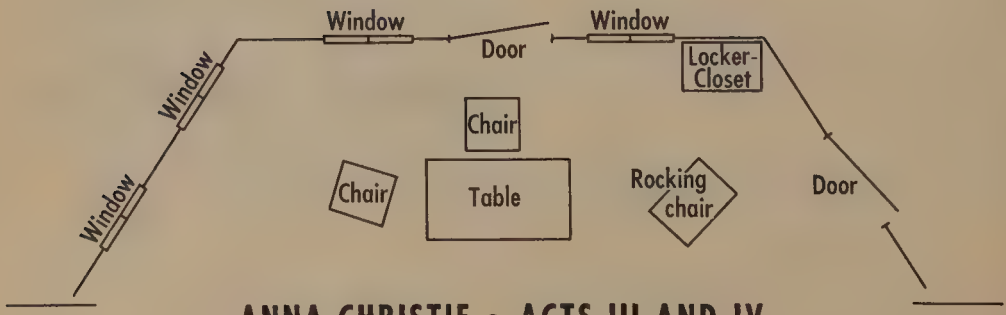

ANNA CHRISTIE • ACTS III AND IV

EUGENE O'NEILL

EUGENE O'NEILL (1888-1953), son of the distinguished actor James O'Neill, was born in New York City; his birthplace, appropriately, was on Broadway. After accompanying his family on their theatrical tours and attending various boarding schools, he studied at Princeton for a year (1906); his suspension there ended his formal education. He worked for a time in a mail-order house, got married, and then set off in 1909 for Honduras in search of gold; the following year he shipped on a freighter destined for Buenos Aires. Returning to New York after a voyage to South Africa, he lived for a time in a waterfront dive called "Jimmy the Priest's," where he knew the world of *Anna Christie* at first hand. In December 1912, after he had worked for a few months as a reporter in New London, he was ordered to a sanatorium for the treatment of tuberculosis. In that year, too, O'Neill was divorced. His experiences as an ordinary seaman, his association with stevedores and outcasts, and his rough-and-tumble life as a vagabond are reflected in many of his plays.

O'Neill's decision in 1913 to become a dramatist marked a turning point in his life. His need for help on technical matters led him to attend Professor George Pierce Baker's famous drama workshop at Harvard in 1913-1914. Although he received encouragement, he became bored with the routine and his classmates and soon left. After spending the winter of 1915-1916 in Greenwich Village, O'Neill became associated with the Provincetown Players, who produced many of his early plays on Cape Cod. By 1920 he was through experimenting with one-act plays, which he felt were too limited in scope, and had produced his first full-length drama, *Beyond the Horizon,* which established him as a successful dramatist and won him his first Pulitzer Prize. *Anna Christie* and *Strange Interlude* were also awarded this prize, and in 1936 O'Neill received the Nobel Prize for Literature.

Whatever the final critical estimate of O'Neill may be, it cannot be denied that he was America's outstanding dramatist during the nineteen-twenties and thirties. When O'Neill began writing, he reflected the contemporary American mood of frustration and rebellion against existing dramatic conventions in much the same way that Ibsen and Shaw had expressed rebellion against

the conventions of Continental and English drama toward the end of the nineteenth century. O'Neill brought to the American stage not only an intensity of feeling and language previously unknown in native drama, but also types of characters totally neglected by earlier playwrights — prostitutes, drunken sailors, derelicts, waterfront parasites — all in the violent throes of personal agony and, often, fated for sudden death.

Moreover, O'Neill was an inveterate experimenter in the theater; his style has ranged from realism to naturalism to expressionism to impressionism. As though trying the resources of the modern theater to their limits, he has played with masks, puppets, a chorus, rapidly shifting scenes, and double speeches to reflect a character's inner consciousness. Not content with writing plays of conventional length, he wrote plays whose length made it necessary to begin the performance in the afternoon, recess for dinner, and resume in the evening. In his last years he began a cycle of nine plays as a chronicle of American life and society, but illness forced him to abandon this ambitious project.

Strangely, most of O'Neill's technical innovations have not been adopted by younger playwrights. Although they are indebted to him for helping to liberate the American stage from outworn dramatic conventions, they have not been interested in the philosophical and metaphysical concerns which governed his stylistic experiments. But it would be an error to regard O'Neill primarily as a dramatic technician, for no man in the modern theater has struggled harder to dramatize the ultimate philosophical problems of life as he saw them. "Even in his metaphysical flight O'Neill has caught the reality of common people living on sea or land," writes John Gassner; "he has presented humanity struggling against inherited or acquired limitations and facing racial prejudice, poverty, the hardness of a stony soil, the frustrations of puritanism, and the effects of a materialistic world which thwarts or perverts the spirit."[1] The recurrent theme in O'Neill's work is man's frustration in his search for happiness in a modern world where religion and traditional moral values have failed to provide him with insight into the meaning of his physical, natural life. For O'Neill, value lies, not in the powers of the intellect, but in man's struggle to live both emotionally and physically. That the struggle will probably be unsuccessful because of the immensity of the social and cosmic forces working against him is not important; the crucial thing is the fight itself, an exciting, terrible, but not frightening adventure at the end of which await, inevitably, death and freedom.

[1] John Gassner, *Masters of the Drama* (New York, 1954), p. 641.

It may well be that in none of O'Neill's plays is there an artistic unity of dramatic technique and philosophical content; O'Neill may be, after all, the most imperfect of the theater's great writers. Nonetheless, we must acknowledge in his dramatizing of modern man's grappling with forces in himself, or in society, or in the universe itself, an intensity and a compelling excitement that must be reckoned with.

PRINCIPAL PLAYS

Bound East for Cardiff (1916)
The Long Voyage Home (1917)
'Ile (1917)
The Moon of the Caribbees (1918)
Beyond the Horizon (1920)
The Emperor Jones (1920)
Gold (1921)
Anna Christie (1921)
The Hairy Ape (1922)
The First Man (1922)
All God's Chillun Got Wings (1924)
Welded (1924)
Desire Under the Elms (1924)
The Fountain (1925)
The Great God Brown (1926)
Lazarus Laughed (1926)
Marco Millions (1928)
Strange Interlude (1928)
Dynamo (1929)
Mourning Becomes Electra (1931)
Ah, Wilderness! (1933)
Days Without End (1934)
The Iceman Cometh (1946)
Moon of the Misbegotten (1947)

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CHARACTERS

"JOHNNY-THE-PRIEST"
TWO LONGSHOREMEN
A POSTMAN
LARRY, *bartender*
CHRIS CHRISTOPHERSON, *captain of the barge* Simeon Winthrop
MARTHY OWEN
ANNA CHRISTOPHERSON, *Chris's daughter*
THREE MEN OF A STEAMER'S CREW
MAT BURKE, *a stoker*
JOHNSON, *deckhand on the barge*

Anna Christie was first produced at the Vanderbilt Theatre, New York City, on November 2, 1921.

Act One

"JOHNNY-THE-PRIEST'S" *saloon near South Street, New York City. The stage is divided into two sections, showing a small back room on the right. On the left, forward, of the barroom, a large window looking out on the street. Beyond it, the main entrance—a double swinging door. Farther back, another window. The bar runs from left to right nearly the whole length of the rear wall. In back of the bar, a small showcase displaying a few bottles of case goods, for which there is evidently little call. The remainder of the rear space in front of the large mirrors is occupied by half-barrels of cheap whisky of the "nickel-a-shot" variety, from which the liquor is drawn by means of spigots. On the right is an open doorway leading to the back room. In the back room are four round wooden tables with five chairs grouped about each. In the rear, a family entrance opening on a side street.*

It is late afternoon of a day in fall.

As the curtain rises, JOHNNY *is discovered.* "JOHNNY-THE-PRIEST" *deserves his nickname. With his pale, thin, clean-shaven face, mild blue eyes and white hair, a cassock would seem more suited to him than the apron he wears. Neither his voice nor his general manner dispel this illusion which has made him a personage of the water front. They are soft and bland. But beneath all his mildness one senses the man behind the mask—cynical, callous, hard as nails. He is lounging at ease behind the bar, a pair of spectacles on his nose, reading an evening paper.*

Two longshoremen enter from the street, wearing their working aprons, the button of the union pinned conspicuously on the caps pulled sideways on their heads at an aggressive angle.

FIRST LONGSHOREMAN (*as they range themselves at the bar*): Gimme a shock. Number Two. (*He tosses a coin on the bar.*)

SECOND LONGSHOREMAN: Same here. (JOHNNY *sets two glasses of barrel whisky before them.*)

FIRST LONGSHOREMAN: Here's luck! (*The other nods. They gulp down their whisky.*)

SECOND LONGSHOREMAN (*putting money on the bar*): Give us another.

FIRST LONGSHOREMAN: Gimme a scoop this time—lager and porter. I'm dry.

SECOND LONGSHOREMAN: Same here. (JOHNNY *draws the lager and porter and sets the big, foaming schooners before them. They drink down half the contents and start to talk together hurriedly in low tones. The door on the left is swung open and* LARRY *enters. He is a boyish, red-cheeked, rather good-looking young fellow of twenty or so.*)

LARRY (*nodding to* JOHNNY—*cheerily*): Hello, boss.

JOHNNY: Hello, Larry. (*With a glance at his watch*) Just on time. (LARRY *goes to the right behind the bar, takes off his coat, and puts on an apron.*)

FIRST LONGSHOREMAN (*abruptly*): Let's drink up and get back to it. (*They finish their drinks and go out left.* THE POSTMAN *enters as they leave. He exchanges nods with* JOHNNY *and throws a letter on the bar.*)

THE POSTMAN: Addressed care of you, Johnny. Know him?

JOHNNY (*picks up the letter, adjusting his spectacles.* LARRY *comes and peers over his shoulder.* JOHNNY *reads very slowly*): Christopher Christopherson.

THE POSTMAN (*helpfully*): Square-head name.

LARRY: Old Chris—that's who.

JOHNNY: Oh, sure. I was forgetting Chris carried a hell of a name like that. Letters come here for him sometimes before, I remember now. Long time ago, though.

THE POSTMAN: It'll get to him all right then?

JOHNNY: Sure thing. He comes here whenever he's in port.

THE POSTMAN (*turning to go*): Sailor, eh?

JOHNNY (*with a grin*): Captain of a coal barge.

THE POSTMAN (*laughing*): Some job! Well, s'long.

JOHNNY: S'long. I'll see he gets it. (THE POSTMAN *goes out.* JOHNNY *scrutinizes the letter*) You got good eyes, Larry. Where's it from?

LARRY (*after a glance*): St. Paul. That'll be in Minnesota, I'm thinkin'. Looks like a woman's writing, too, the old divil!

JOHNNY: He's got a daughter somewheres out West, I think he told me once. (*He puts the letter on the cash register*) Come to think of it, I ain't seen old Chris in a dog's age. (*Putting his overcoat on, he comes around the end of the bar*) Guess I'll be gettin' home. See you tomorrow.

LARRY: Good night to ye, boss. (*As* JOHNNY *goes toward the street door, it is pushed open and* CHRISTOPHER CHRISTOPHERSON *enters. He is a short, squat, broad-shouldered man of about fifty, with a round, weather-beaten, red face from which his light blue eyes peer short-sightedly, twinkling with a simple good humor. His large mouth, overhung by a thick, drooping, yellow mustache, is childishly self-willed and weak, of an obstinate kindliness. A thick neck is jammed like a post into the heavy trunk of his body. His arms with their big, hairy, freckled hands, and his stumpy legs terminating in large flat feet, are awkwardly short and muscular. He walks with a clumsy, rolling gait. His voice, when not raised in a hollow boom, is toned down to a sly, confidential half-whisper with something vaguely plaintive in its quality. He is dressed in a wrinkled, ill-fitting dark suit of shore clothes, and wears a faded cap of gray cloth over his mop of grizzled, blond hair. Just now his face beams with a too-blissful happiness, and he has evidently been drinking. He reaches his hand out to* JOHNNY.)

CHRIS: Hello, Yohnny! Have drink on me. Come on, Larry. Give us drink. Have one yourself. (*Putting his hand in his pocket*) Ay gat money—plenty money—

JOHNNY (*shakes* CHRIS *by the hand*): Speak of the devil. We was just talkin' about you.

LARRY (*coming to the end of the bar*): Hello, Chris. Put it there. (*They shake hands.*)

CHRIS (*beaming*): Give us drink.

JOHNNY (*with a grin*): You got a half-snootful now. Where'd you get it?

CHRIS (*grinning*): Oder fallar on oder barge—Irish fallar—he gat bottle vhisky and we drank it, yust us two. Dot vhisky gat kick, by yingo! Ay yust come ashore. Give us drink, Larry. Ay vas little drunk, not much. Yust feel good. (*He laughs and commences to sing in a nasal, high-pitched quaver*)
"My Yosephine, come aboard de ship. Long time Ay vait for you. De moon, she shi-i-i-ine. She looka yus like you.
Tchee-tchee, tchee-tchee, tchee-tchee, tchee-tchee."
(*To the accompaniment of this last he waves his hand as if he were conducting an orchestra.*)

JOHNNY (*with a laugh*): Same old Yosie, eh Chris?

CHRIS: You don' know good song when you hear him. Italian fallar on oder barge, he learn me dat. Give us drink. (*He throws change on the bar.*)

LARRY (*with a professional air*): What's your pleasure, gentlemen?

JOHNNY: Small beer, Larry.

CHRIS: Vhisky—Number Two.

LARRY (*as he gets their drinks*): I'll take a cigar on you.

CHRIS (*lifting his glass*): Skoal! (*He drinks.*)

JOHNNY: Drink hearty.

CHRIS (*immediately*): Have oder drink.

JOHNNY: No. Some other time. Got to go home now. So you've just landed? Where are you in from this time?

CHRIS: Norfolk. Ve make slow voyage—dirty vedder—yust fog, fog, fog, all bloody time! (*There is an insistent ring from the doorbell at the family entrance in the back room.* CHRIS *gives a start—hurriedly*) Ay go open, Larry. Ay forgat. It vas Marthy. She come with me.

(*He goes into the back room.*)

LARRY (*with a chuckle*): He's still got that same cow livin' with him, the old fool!

JOHNNY (*with a grin*): A sport, Chris is. Well, I'll beat it home. S'long. (*He goes to the street door.*)

LARRY: So long, boss.

JOHNNY: Oh—don't forget to give him his letter.

LARRY: I won't. (JOHNNY *goes out. In the meantime,* CHRIS *has opened the family entrance door, admitting* MARTHY. *She might be forty or fifty. Her jowly, mottled face, with its thick red nose, is streaked with interlacing purple veins. Her thick, gray hair is piled anyhow in a greasy mop on top of her round head. Her figure is flabby and fat; her breath comes in wheezy gasps; she speaks in a loud, mannish voice, punctuated by explosions of hoarse laughter. But there still twinkles in her blood-shot blue eyes a youthful lust for life which hard usage has failed to stifle, a sense of humor mocking, but good-tempered. She wears a man's cap, doublebreasted man's jacket, and a grimy, calico skirt. Her bare feet are encased in a man's brogans several sizes too large for her, which gives her a shuffling, wobbly gait.*)

MARTHY (*grumblingly*): What yuh tryin' to do, Dutchy—keep me standin' out there all day? (*She comes forward and sits at the table in the right corner, front.*)

CHRIS (*mollifyingly*): Ay'm sorry, Marthy. Ay talk to Yohnny. Ay forgat. What you goin' take for drink?

MARTHY (*appeased*): Gimme a scoop of lager an' ale.

CHRIS: Ay go bring him back. (*He returns to the bar*) Lager and ale for Marthy, Larry. Vhisky for me. (*He throws change on the bar.*)

LARRY: Right you are. (*Then remembering, he takes the letter from in back of the bar*) Here's a letter for you—from St. Paul, Minnesota —and a lady's writin'. (*He grins.*)

CHRIS (*quickly—taking it*): Oh, den it come from my daughter,

Anna. She live dere. (*He turns the letter over in his hands uncertainly*) Ay don't gat letter from Anna—must be a year.

LARRY (*jokingly*): That's a fine fairy tale to be tellin'—your daughter! Sure I'll bet it's some bum.

CHRIS (*soberly*): No. Dis come from Anna. (*Engrossed by the letter in his hand—uncertainly*) By golly, Ay tank Ay'm too drunk for read dis letter from Anna. Ay tank Ay sat down for a minute. You bring drinks in back room, Larry. (*He goes into the room on right.*)

MARTHY (*angrily*): Where's my lager an' ale, yuh big stiff?

CHRIS (*preoccupied*): Larry bring him. (*He sits down opposite her.* LARRY *brings in the drinks and sets them on the table. He and* MARTHY *exchange nods of recognition.* LARRY *stands looking at* CHRIS *curiously.* MARTHY *takes a long draught of her schooner and heaves a huge sigh of satisfaction, wiping her mouth with the back of her hand.* CHRIS *stares at the letter for a moment—slowly opens it, and, squinting his eyes, commences to read laboriously, his lips moving as he spells out the words. As he reads his face lights up with an expression of mingled joy and bewilderment.*)

LARRY: Good news?

MARTHY (*her curiosity also aroused*): What's that yuh got—a letter, fur Gawd's sake?

CHRIS (*pauses for a moment, after finishing the letter, as if to let the news sink in—then suddenly pounds his fist on the table with happy excitement*): Py yiminy! Yust tank, Anna say she's comin' here right avay! She gat sick on yob in St. Paul, she say. It's short letter, don't tal me much more'n dat. (*Beaming*) Py golly, dat's good news all at one time for ole fallar! (*Then turning to* MARTHY, *rather shamefacedly*) You know, Marthy, Ay've tole you Ay don't see my Anna since she vas little gel in Sveden five year ole.

MARTHY: How old'll she be now?

CHRIS: She must be—lat me see—she must be twenty year ole, py Yo!

LARRY (*surprised*): You've not seen her in fifteen years?

CHRIS (*suddenly growing somber—in a low tone*): No. Ven she vas

little gel, Ay vas bo'sun on vindjammer. Ay never gat home only few time dem year. Ay'm fool sailor fallar. My voman—Anna's mother—she gat tired vait all time Sveden for me ven Ay don't never come. She come dis country, bring Anna, dey go out Minnesota, live with her cousins on farm. Den ven her mo'der die ven Ay was on voyage, Ay tank it's better dem cousins keep Anna. Ay tank it's better Anna live on farm, den she don't know dat ole davil, sea, she don't know fa'der like me.

LARRY (*with a wink at* MARTHY): This girl, now, 'll be marryin' a sailor herself, likely. It's in the blood.

CHRIS (*suddenly springing to his feet and smashing his fist on the table in a rage*): No, py God! She don't do dat!

MARTHY (*grasping her schooner hastily—angrily*): Hey, look out, yuh nut! Wanta spill my suds for me?

LARRY (*amazed*): Oho, what's up with you? Ain't you a sailor yourself now, and always been?

CHRIS (*slowly*): Dat's yust vhy Ay say it. (*Forcing a smile*) Sailor vas all right fallar, but not for marry gel. No. Ay know dat. Anna's mo'der, she know it, too.

LARRY (*as* CHRIS *remains sunk in gloomy reflection*): When is your daughter comin'? Soon?

CHRIS (*roused*): Py yiminy, Ay forgat. (*Reads through the letter hurriedly*) She say she come right avay, dat's all.

LARRY: She'll maybe be comin' here to look for you, I s'pose. (*He returns to the bar, whistling. Left alone with* MARTHY, *who stares at him with a twinkle of malicious humor in her eyes,* CHRIS *suddenly becomes desperately ill-at-ease. He fidgets, then gets up hurriedly.*)

CHRIS: Ay gat speak with Larry. Ay be right back. (*Mollifyingly*) Ay bring you oder drink.

MARTHY (*emptying her glass*): Sure. That's me. (*As he retreats with glass she guffaws after him derisively.*)

CHRIS (*to* LARRY *in an alarmed whisper*): Py yingo, Ay gat dat

Marthy shore off barge before Anna come! Anna raise hell if she find dat out. Marthy raise hell, too, for go, py golly!

LARRY (*with a chuckle*): Serve ye right, ye old divil—havin' a woman at your age!

CHRIS (*scratching his head in a quandary*): You tal me lie for tal Marthy, Larry, so's she gat off barge quick.

LARRY: She knows your daughter's comin'. Tell her to get the hell out of it.

CHRIS: No. Ay don't like make her feel bad.

LARRY: You're an old mush! Keep your girl away from the barge, then. She'll likely want to stay ashore anyway. (*Curiously*) What does she work at, your Anna?

CHRIS: She stay on dem cousins' farm till two year ago. Dan she gat yob nurse gel in St. Paul. (*Then shaking his head resolutely*) But Ay don't vant for her gat yob now. Ay vant for her stay with me.

LARRY (*scornfully*): On a coal barge! She'll not like that, I'm thinkin'.

MARTHY (*shouts from next room*): Don't I get that bucket o' suds, Dutchy?

CHRIS (*startled—in apprehensive confusion*): Yes, Ay come, Marthy.

LARRY (*drawing the lager and ale, hands it to* CHRIS—*laughing*): Now you're in for it! You'd better tell her straight to get out!

CHRIS (*shaking in his boots*): Py golly. (*He takes her drink in to* MARTHY *and sits down at the table. She sips it in silence.* LARRY *moves quietly close to the partition to listen, grinning with expectation.* CHRIS *seems on the verge of speaking, hesitates, gulps down his whisky desperately as if seeking for courage. He attempts to whistle a few bars of "Yosephine" with careless bravado, but the whistle peters out futilely.* MARTHY *stares at him keenly, taking in his embarrassment with a malicious twinkle of amusement in her eye.* CHRIS *clears his throat*) Marthy—

MARTHY (*aggressively*): Wha's that? (*Then, pretending to fly into a*

rage, her eyes enjoying CHRIS' *misery*) I'm wise to what's in back of your nut, Dutchy. Yuh want to git rid o' me, huh?—now she's comin'. Gimme the bum's rush ashore, huh? Lemme tell yuh, Dutchy, there ain't a square-head workin' on a boat man enough to git away with that. Don't start nothin' yuh can't finish!

CHRIS (*miserably*): Ay don't start nutting, Marthy.

MARTHY (*glares at him for a second—then cannot control a burst of laughter*): Ho-ho! yuh're a scream, Square-head—an honest-ter-Gawd knockout! Ho-ho! (*She wheezes, panting for breath.*)

CHRIS (*with childish pique*): Ay don't see nutting for laugh at.

MARTHY: Take a slant in the mirror and yuh'll see. Ho-ho! (*Recovering from her mirth—chuckling, scornfully*) A square-head tryin' to kid Marthy Owen at this late day!—after me campin' with barge men the last twenty years. I'm wise to the game, up, down, and sideways. I ain't been born and dragged up on the water front for nothin'. Think I'd make trouble, huh? Not me! I'll pack up me duds an' beat it. I'm quittin' yuh, get me? I'm tellin' yuh I'm sick of stickin' with yuh, and I'm leavin' yuh flat, see? There's plenty of other guys on other barges waitin' for me. Always was, I always found. (*She claps the astonished* CHRIS *on the back*) So cheer up, Dutchy! I'll be offen the barge before she comes. You'll be rid o' me for good—and me o' you—good riddance for both of us. Ho-ho!

CHRIS (*seriously*): Ay don' tank dat. You vas good gel, Marthy.

MARTHY (*grinning*): Good girl? Aw, can the bull! Well, yuh treated me square, yuhself. So it's fifty-fifty. Nobody's sore at nobody. We're still good frien's, huh? (LARRY *returns to bar.*)

CHRIS (*beaming now that he sees his troubles disappearing*): Yes, py golly.

MARTHY: That's the talkin'! In all my time I tried never to split with a guy with no hard feelin's. But what was yuh so scared about—that I'd kick up a row? That ain't Marthy's way. (*Scornfully*) Think I'd break my heart to lose yuh? Commit suicide, huh? Ho-ho! Gawd! The world's full o' men if that's all I'd worry about! (*Then with a grin, after emptying her glass*) Blow me to another scoop, huh? I'll drink your kid's health for yuh.

CHRIS (*eagerly*): Sure tang. Ay go gat him. (*He takes the two glasses into the bar*) Oder drink. Same for both.

LARRY (*getting the drinks and putting them on the bar*): She's not such a bad lot, that one.

CHRIS (*jovially*): She's good gel, Ay tal you! Py golly, Ay calabrate now! Give me vhisky here at bar, too. (*He puts down money.* LARRY *serves him*) You have drink, Larry.

LARRY (*virtuously*): You know I never touch it.

CHRIS: You don't know what you miss. Skoal! (*He drinks—then begins to sing loudly*) "My Yosephine, come board de ship—" (*He picks up the drinks for* MARTHY *and himself and walks unsteadily into the back room, singing*)
"De moon, she shi-i-i-ine. She looks yust like you.
Tchee-tchee, tchee-tchee, tchee-tchee, tchee-tchee."

MARTHY (*grinning, hands to ears*): Gawd!

CHRIS (*sitting down*): Ay'm good singer, yes? Ve drink, eh? Skoal! Ay calabrate! (*He drinks*) Ay calabrate 'cause Anna's coming home. You know, Marthy, Ay never write for her to come, 'cause Ay tank Ay'm no good for her. But all time Ay hope like hell some day she vant for see me and den she come. And dat's vay it happen now, py yiminy! (*His face beaming*) What you tank she look like, Marthy? Ay bet you she's fine, good, strong gel, pooty like hell! Living on farm made her like dat. And Ay bet you some day she marry good, steady land fallar here in East, have home all her own, have kits—and dan Ay'm ole grandfader, py golly! And Ay go visit dem every time Ay gat in port near! (*Bursting with joy*) By yiminy crickens, Ay calabrate dat! (*Shouts*) Bring oder drink, Larry! (*He smashes his fist on the table with a bang.*)

LARRY (*coming in from bar—irritably*): Easy there! Don't be breakin' the table, you old goat!

CHRIS (*by way of reply, grins foolishly and begins to sing*):
"My Yosephine, come board de ship—"

MARTHY (*touching* CHRIS' *arm persuasively*): You're soused to the ears, Dutchy. Go out and put a feed into you. It'll sober you up.

(*Then as* CHRIS *shakes his head obstinately*) Listen, yuh old nut! Yuh don't know what time your kid's liable to show up. Yuh want to be sober when she comes, don't yuh?

CHRIS (*aroused—gets unsteadily to his feet*): Py golly, yes.

LARRY: That's good sense for you. A good beef stew'll fix you. Go round the corner.

CHRIS: All right. Ay be back soon, Marthy. (CHRIS *goes through the bar and out the street door.*)

LARRY: He'll come round all right with some grub in him.

MARTHY: Sure. (LARRY *goes back to the bar and resumes his newspaper.* MARTHY *sips what is left of her schooner reflectively. There is the ring of the family entrance bell.* LARRY *comes to the door and opens it a trifle—then, with a puzzled expression, pulls it wide.* ANNA CHRISTOPHERSON *enters. She is a tall, blond, fully-developed girl of twenty, handsome after a large, Viking-daughter fashion but now run down in health and plainly showing all the outward evidences of belonging to the world's oldest profession. Her youthful face is already hard and cynical beneath its layer of make-up. Her clothes are the tawdry finery of peasant stock turned prostitute. She comes and sinks wearily in a chair by the table, left front.*)

ANNA: Gimme a whisky—ginger ale on the side. (*Then, as* LARRY *turns to go, forcing a winning smile at him*) And don't be stingy, baby.

LARRY (*sarcastically*): Shall I serve it in a pail?

ANNA (*with a hard laugh*): That suits me down to the ground. (LARRY *goes into the bar. The two women size each other up with frank stares.* LARRY *comes back with the drink which he sets before* ANNA *and returns to the bar again.* ANNA *downs her drink at a gulp. Then, after a moment, as the alcohol begins to rouse her, she turns to* MARTHY *with a friendly smile*) Gee, I needed that bad, all right, all right!

MARTHY (*nodding her head sympathetically*): Sure—yuh look all in. Been on a bat?

ANNA: No—traveling—day and a half on the train. Had to sit up all night in the dirty coach, too. Gawd, I thought I'd never get here!

MARTHY (*with a start—looking at her intently*): Where'd yuh come from, huh?

ANNA: St. Paul—out in Minnesota.

MARTHY (*staring at her in amazement—slowly*): So—yuh're— (*She suddenly bursts out into hoarse, ironical laughter*) Gawd!

ANNA: All the way from Minnesota, sure. (*Flaring up*) What you laughing at? Me?

MARTHY (*hastily*): No, honest, kid. I was thinkin' of somethin' else.

ANNA (*mollified—with a smile*): Well, I wouldn't blame you, at that. Guess I do look rotten—yust out of the hospital two weeks. I'm going to have another 'ski. What d'you say? Have something on me?

MARTHY: Sure I will. T'anks. (*She calls*) Hey, Larry! Little service! (*He comes in.*)

ANNA: Same for me.

MARTHY: Same here. (LARRY *takes their glasses and goes out.*)

ANNA: Why don't you come sit over here, be sociable. I'm a dead stranger in this burg—and I ain't spoke a word with no one since day before yesterday.

MARTHY: Sure thing. (*She shuffles over to* ANNA's *table and sits down opposite her.* LARRY *brings the drinks and* ANNA *pays him.*)

ANNA: Skoal! Here's how! (*She drinks.*)

MARTHY: Here's luck! (*She takes a gulp from her schooner.*)

ANNA (*taking a package of Sweet Caporal cigarettes from her bag*): Let you smoke in here, won't they?

MARTHY (*doubtfully*): Sure. (*Then with evident anxiety*) On'y trow it away if yuh hear someone comin'.

ANNA (*lighting one and taking a deep inhale*): Gee, they're fussy in this dump, ain't they? (*She puffs, staring at the table top.* MARTHY *looks her over with a new penetrating interest, taking in every detail of her face.* ANNA *suddenly becomes conscious of this appraising stare —resentfully*) Ain't nothing wrong with me, is there? You're looking hard enough.

MARTHY (*irritated by the other's tone—scornfully*): Ain't got to look much. I got your number the minute you stepped in the door.

ANNA (*her eyes narrowing*): Ain't you smart! Well, I got yours, too, without no trouble. You're me forty years from now. That's you! (*She gives a hard little laugh.*)

MARTHY (*angrily*): Is that so? Well, I'll tell you straight, kiddo, that Marthy Owen never— (*She catches herself up short—with a grin*) What are you and me scrappin' over? Let's cut it out, huh? Me, I don't want no hard feelin's with no one. (*Extending her hand*) Shake and forget it, huh?

ANNA (*shakes her hand gladly*): Only too glad to. I ain't looking for trouble. Let's have 'nother. What d'you say?

MARTHY (*shaking her head*): Not for mine. I'm full up. And you— Had anythin' to eat lately?

ANNA: Not since this morning on the train.

MARTHY: Then yuh better go easy on it, hadn't yuh?

ANNA (*after a moment's hesitation*): Guess you're right. I got to meet someone, too. But my nerves is on edge after that rotten trip.

MARTHY: Yuh said yuh was just outa the hospital?

ANNA: Two weeks ago. (*Leaning over to* MARTHY *confidentially*) The joint I was in out in St. Paul got raided. That was the start. The judge give all us girls thirty days. The others didn't seem to mind being in the cooler much. Some of 'em was used to it. But me, I couldn't stand it. It got my goat right—couldn't eat or sleep or nothing. I never could stand being caged up nowheres. I got good and sick and they had to send me to the hospital. It was nice there. I was sorry to leave it, honest!

MARTHY (*after a slight pause*): Did yuh say yuh got to meet someone here?

ANNA: Yes. Oh, not what you mean. It's my Old Man I got to meet. Honest! It's funny, too. I ain't seen him since I was a kid—don't even know what he looks like—yust had a letter every now and then. This was always the only address he give me to write him back. He's yanitor of some building here now—used to be a sailor.

MARTHY (*astonished*): Janitor!

ANNA: Sure. And I was thinking maybe, seeing he ain't never done a thing for me in my life, he might be willing to stake me to a room and eats till I get rested up. (*Wearily*) Gee, I sure need that rest! I'm knocked out. (*Then resignedly*) But I ain't expecting much from him. Give you a kick when you're down, that's what all men do. (*With sudden passion*) Men, I hate 'em—all of 'em! And I don't expect he'll turn out no better than the rest. (*Then with sudden interest*) Say, do you hang out around this dump much?

MARTHY: Oh, off and on.

ANNA: Then maybe you know him—my Old Man—or at least seen him?

MARTHY: It ain't old Chris, is it?

ANNA: Old Chris?

MARTHY: Chris Christopherson, his full name is.

ANNA (*excitedly*): Yes, that's him! Anna Christopherson—that's my real name—only out there I called myself Anna Christie. So you know him, eh?

MARTHY (*evasively*): Seen him about for years.

ANNA: Say, what's he like, tell me, honest?

MARTHY: Oh, he's short and—

ANNA (*impatiently*): I don't care what he looks like. What kind is he?

MARTHY (*earnestly*): Well, yuh can bet your life, kid, he's as good an old guy as ever walked on two feet. That goes!

ANNA (*pleased*): I'm glad to hear it. Then you think he'll stake me to that rest cure I'm after?

MARTHY (*emphatically*): Surest thing you know. (*Disgustedly*) But where'd yuh get the idea he was a janitor?

ANNA: He wrote me he was himself.

MARTHY: Well, he was lyin'. He ain't. He's captain of a barge—five men under him.

ANNA (*disgusted in her turn*): A barge? What kind of a barge?

MARTHY: Coal, mostly.

ANNA: A coal barge! (*With a harsh laugh*) If that ain't a swell job to find your long lost Old Man working at! Gee, I knew something'd be bound to turn out wrong—always does with me. That puts my idea of his giving me a rest on the bum.

MARTHY: What d'yuh mean?

ANNA: I s'pose he lives on the boat, don't he?

MARTHY: Sure. What about it? Can't you live on it, too?

ANNA (*scornfully*): Me? On a dirty coal barge! What d'you think I am?

MARTHY (*resentfully*): What d'yuh know about barges, huh? Bet yuh ain't never seen one. That's what comes of his bringing yuh up inland—away from the old devil sea—where yuh'd be safe—Gawd! (*The irony of it strikes her sense of humor and she laughs hoarsely.*)

ANNA (*angrily*): His bringing me up! Is that what he tells people! I like his nerve! He let them cousins of my Old Woman's keep me on their farm and work me to death like a dog.

MARTHY: Well, he's got queer notions on some things. I've heard him say a farm was the best place for a kid.

ANNA: Sure. That's what he'd always answer back—and a lot of crazy stuff about staying away from the sea—stuff I couldn't make head or tail to. I thought he must be nutty.

MARTHY: He is on that one point. (*Casually*) So yuh didn't fall for life on the farm, huh?

ANNA: I should say not! The old man of the family, his wife, and four sons—I had to slave for all of 'em. I was only a poor relation, and they treated me worse than they dare treat a hired girl. (*After a moment's hesitation—somberly*) It was one of the sons—the youngest—started me—when I was sixteen. After that, I hated 'em so I'd killed 'em all if I'd stayed. So I run away—to St. Paul.

MARTHY (*who has been listening sympathetically*): I've heard Old Chris talkin' about your bein' a nurse girl out there. Was that all a bluff yuh put up when yuh wrote him?

ANNA: Not on your life, it wasn't. It was true for two years. I didn't go wrong all at one jump. Being a nurse girl was yust what finished me. Taking care of other people's kids, always listening to their bawling and crying, caged in, when you're only a kid yourself and want to go out and see things. At last I got the chance—to get into that house. And you bet your life I took it! (*Defiantly*) And I ain't sorry neither. (*After a pause—with bitter hatred*) It was all men's fault—the whole business. It was men on the farm ordering and beating me—and giving me the wrong start. Then when I was a nurse, it was men again hanging around, bothering me, trying to see what they could get. (*She gives a hard laugh*) And now it's men all the time. Gawd, I hate 'em all, every mother's son of 'em! Don't you?

MARTHY: Oh, I dunno. There's good ones and bad ones, kid. You've just had a run of bad luck with 'em, that's all. Your Old Man, now—old Chris—he's a good one.

ANNA (*skeptically*): He'll have to show me.

MARTHY: Yuh kept right on writing him yuh was a nurse girl still, even after yuh was in the house, didn't yuh?

ANNA: Sure. (*Cynically*) Not that I think he'd care a darn.

MARTHY: Yuh're all wrong about him, kid. (*Earnestly*) I know Old

Chris well for a long time. He's talked to me 'bout you lots o' times. He thinks the world o' you, honest he does.

ANNA: Aw, quit the kiddin'!

MARTHY: Honest! Only, he's a simple old guy, see? He's got nutty notions. But he means well, honest. Listen to me, kid— (*She is interrupted by the opening and shutting of the street door in the bar and by hearing* CHRIS' *voice*) Ssshh!

ANNA: What's up?

CHRIS (*who has entered the bar. He seems considerably sobered up*): Py golly, Larry, dat grub taste good. Marthy in back?

LARRY: Sure—and another tramp with her. (CHRIS *starts for the entrance to the back room.*)

MARTHY (*to* ANNA *in a hurried, nervous whisper*): That's him now. He's comin' in here. Brace up!

ANNA: Who? (CHRIS *opens the door.*)

MARTHY (*as if she were greeting him for the first time*): Why hello, Old Chris. (*Then before he can speak, she shuffles hurriedly past him into the bar, beckoning him to follow her*) Come here. I wanta tell yuh somethin'. (*He goes out to her. She speaks hurriedly in a low voice*) Listen! I'm goin' to beat it down to the barge—pack up me duds and blow. That's her in there—your Anna—just come—waitin' for yuh. Treat her right, see? She's been sick. Well, s'long! (*She goes into the back room—to* ANNA) S'long kid. I gotta beat it now. See yuh later.

ANNA (*nervously*): So long. (MARTHY *goes quickly out of the family entrance.*)

LARRY (*looking at the stupefied* CHRIS *curiously*): Well, what's up now?

CHRIS (*vaguely*): Nutting—nutting. (*He stands before the door to the back room in an agony of embarrassed emotion—then he forces himself to a bold decision, pushes open the door and walks in. He stands there, casts a shy glance at* ANNA, *whose brilliant clothes, and,*

to him, high-toned appearance, awe him terribly. He looks about him with pitiful nervousness as if to avoid the appraising look with which she takes in his face, his clothes, etc.—his voice seeming to plead for her forbearance) Anna!

ANNA (*acutely embarrassed in her turn*): Hello—father. She told me it was you. I yust got here a little while ago.

CHRIS (*goes slowly over to her chair*): It's good—for see you—after all dem years, Anna. (*He bends down over her. After an embarrassed struggle they manage to kiss each other.*)

ANNA (*a trace of genuine feeling in her voice*): It's good to see you, too.

CHRIS (*grasps her arms and looks into her face—then overcome by a wave of fierce tenderness*): Anna lilla! Anna lilla! (*Takes her in his arms.*)

ANNA (*shrinks away from him, half-frightened*): What's that—Swedish? I don't know it. (*Then as if seeking relief from the tension in a voluble chatter*) Gee, I had an awful trip coming here. I'm all in. I had to sit up in the dirty coach all night—couldn't get no sleep, hardly—and then I had a hard job finding this place. I never been in New York before, you know, and—

CHRIS (*who has been staring down at her face admiringly, not hearing what she says—impulsively*): You know you vas awful pooty gel, Anna? Ay bet all men see you fall in love with you, py yiminy!

ANNA (*repelled—harshly*): Cut it! You talk same as they all do.

CHRIS (*hurt—humbly*): Ain't no harm for your fader talk dat vay, Anna.

ANNA (*forcing a short laugh*): No—course not. Only—it's funny to see you and not remember nothing. You're like—a stranger.

CHRIS (*sadly*): Ay s'pose. Ay never come home only few times ven you vas kit in Sveden. You don't remember dat?

ANNA: No. (*Resentfully*) But why didn't you never come home them days? Why didn't you never come out West to see me?

CHRIS (*slowly*): Ay tank, after your mo'der die, ven Ay vas avay on voyage, it's better for you you don't never see me! (*He sinks down in the chair opposite her dejectedly—then turns to her—sadly*) Ay don't know, Anna, vhy Ay never come home Sveden in old year. Ay vant come home end of every voyage. Ay vant see your mo'der, your two bro'der before dey vas drowned, you ven you vas born—but—Ay—don't go. Ay sign on oder ships—go South America, go Australia, go China, go every port all over world many times—but Ay never go aboard ship sail for Sveden. Ven Ay gat money for pay passage home as passenger den— (*He bows his head guiltily*) Ay forgat and Ay spend all money. Ven Ay tank again, it's too late. (*He sighs*) Ay don't know why but dat's vay with most sailor fallar, Anna. Dat ole davil sea make dem crazy fools with her dirty tricks. It's so.

ANNA (*who has watched him keenly while he has been speaking—with a trace of scorn in her voice*): Then you think the sea's to blame for everything, eh? Well, you're still workin' on it, ain't you, spite of all you used to write me about hating it. That dame was here told me you was captain of a coal barge—and you wrote me you was yanitor of a building!

CHRIS (*embarrassed but lying glibly*): Oh, Ay vork on land long time as yanitor. Yust short time ago Ay got dis yob cause Ay vas sick, need open air.

ANNA (*skeptically*): Sick? You? You'd never think it.

CHRIS: And, Anna, dis ain t real sailor yob. Dis ain't real boat on sea. She's yust old tub—like piece of land with house on it dat float. Yob on her ain't sea yob. No. Ay don't gat yob on sea, Anna, if Ay die first. Ay swear dat ven your mo'der die. Ay keep my word, py yingo!

ANNA (*perplexed*): Well, I can't see no difference. (*Dismissing the subject*) Speaking of being sick, I been there myself—yust out of the hospital two weeks ago.

CHRIS (*immediately all concern*): You, Anna? Py golly! (*Anxiously*) You feel better now, dough, don't you? You look little tired, dat's all!

ANNA (*wearily*): I am. Tired to death. I need a long rest and I don't see much chance of getting it.

CHRIS: What you mean, Anna?

ANNA: Well, when I made up my mind to come to see you, I thought you was a yanitor—that you'd have a place where, maybe, if you didn't mind having me, I could visit a while and rest up—till I felt able to get back on the job again.

CHRIS (*eagerly*): But Ay gat place, Anna—nice place. You rest all you want, py yiminy! You don't never have to vork as nurse gel no more. You stay with me, py golly!

ANNA (*surprised and pleased by his eagerness—with a smile*): Then you're really glad to see me—honest?

CHRIS (*pressing one of her hands in both of his*): Anna, Ay like see you like hell, Ay tal you! And don't you talk no more about gatting yob. You stay with me. Ay don't see you for long time, you don't forgat dat. (*His voice trembles*) Ay'm gatting ole. Ay gat no one in vorld but you.

ANNA (*touched—embarrassed by this unfamiliar emotion*): Thanks. It sounds good to hear someone—talk to me that way. Say, though—if you're so lonely—it's funny—why ain't you ever married again?

CHRIS (*shaking his head emphatically—after a pause*): Ay love your mo'der too much for ever do dat, Anna.

ANNA (*impressed—slowly*): I don't remember nothing about her. What was she like? Tell me.

CHRIS: Ay tal you all about everytang—and you tal me all tangs happen to you. But not here now. Dis ain't good place for young gel, anyway. Only no good sailor fallar come here for gat drunk. (*He gets to his feet quickly and picks up her bag*) You come with me, Anna. You need lie down, gat rest.

ANNA (*half rises to her feet, then sits down again*): Where're you going?

CHRIS: Come. Ve gat on board.

ANNA (*disappointedly*): On board your barge, you mean? (*Dryly*)

Nix for mine! (*Then seeing his crestfallen look—forcing a smile*) Do you think that's a good place for a young girl like me—a coal barge?

CHRIS (*dully*): Yes, Ay tank. (*He hesitates—then continues more and more pleadingly*) You don't know how nice it's on barge, Anna. Tug come and ve gat towed out on voyage—yust water all round, and sun, and fresh air, and good grub for make you strong, healthy gel. You see many tangs you don't see before. You gat moonlight at night, maybe; see steamer pass; see schooner make sail—see everytang dat's pooty. You need take rest like dat. You work too hard for young gel already. You need vacation, yes!

ANNA (*who has listened to him with a growing interest—with an uncertain laugh*): It sounds good to hear you tell it. I'd sure like a trip on the water, all right. It's the barge idea has me stopped. Well, I'll go down with you and have a look—and maybe I'll take a chance. Gee, I'd do anything once.

CHRIS (*picks up her bag again*): Ve go, eh?

ANNA: What's the rush? Wait a second. (*Forgetting the situation for a moment, she relapses into the familiar form and flashes one of her winning trade smiles at him*) Gee, I'm thirsty.

CHRIS (*sets down her bag immediately—hastily*): Ay'm sorry, Anna. What you tank you like for drink, eh?

ANNA (*promptly*): I'll take a— (*Then suddenly reminded—confusedly*) I don't know. What'a they got here?

CHRIS (*with a grin*): Ay don't tank dey got much fancy drink for young gel in dis place, Anna. Yinger ale—sas-prilla, maybe.

ANNA (*forcing a laugh herself*): Make it sas, then.

CHRIS (*coming up to her—with a wink*): Ay tal you, Anna, ve calabrate, yes—dis one time because ve meet after many year. (*In a half whisper, embarrassedly*) Dey gat good port wine, Anna. It's good for you, Ay tank—little bit—for give you appetite. It ain't strong, neider. One glass don't go to your head, Ay promise.

ANNA (*with a half hysterical laugh*): All right. I'll take port.

CHRIS: Ay go gat him. (*He goes to the bar. As soon as the door closes,* ANNA *starts to her feet.*)

ANNA (*picking up her bag—half-aloud—stammeringly*): Gawd, I can't stand this! I better beat it. (*Then she lets her bag drop, stumbles over to her chair again, and covering her face with her hands, begins to sob.*)

LARRY (*putting down his paper as* CHRIS *comes up—with a grin*): Well, who's the blonde?

CHRIS (*proudly*): Dat vas Anna, Larry.

LARRY (*in amazement*): Your daughter, Anna? (CHRIS *nods.* LARRY *lets a long, low whistle escape him and turns away embarrassedly.*)

CHRIS: Don't you tank she vas pooty gel, Larry?

LARRY (*rising to the occasion*): Sure! A peach!

CHRIS: You bet you! Give me drink for take back—one port vine for Anna—she calabrate dis one time with me—and small beer for me.

LARRY (*as he gets the drinks*): Small beer for you, eh? She's reformin' you already.

CHRIS (*pleased*): You bet! (*He takes the drinks. As she hears him coming,* ANNA *hastily dries her eyes, tries to smile.* CHRIS *comes in and sets the drinks down on the table—stares at her for a second anxiously—patting her hand*) You look tired, Anna. Vell, Ay make you take good long rest now. (*Picking up his beer*) Come, you drink vine. It put new life in you. (*She lifts her glass—he grins*) Skoal, Anna! You know dat Svedish word?

ANNA: Skoal! (*Downing her port at a gulp like a drink of whisky—her lips trembling*) Skoal? Guess I know that word, all right!

(*The Curtain Falls.*)

Act Two

SCENE: *Ten days later. The stern of the deeply-laden barge,* Simeon Winthrop, *at anchor in the outer harbor of Provincetown, Mass. It is ten o'clock at night. Dense fog shrouds the barge on all sides, and she floats motionless on a calm. A lantern set up on an immense coil of thick hawser sheds a dull, filtering light on objects near it—the heavy steel bits for making fast the tow lines, etc. In the rear is the cabin, its misty windows glowing wanly with the light of a lamp inside. The chimney of the cabin stove rises a few feet above the roof. The doleful tolling of bells, on Long Point, on ships at anchor, breaks the silence at regular intervals.*

As the curtain rises, ANNA *is discovered standing near the coil of rope on which the lantern is placed. She looks healthy, transformed, the natural color has come back to her face. She has on a black oilskin coat, but wears no hat. She is staring out into the fog astern with an expression of awed wonder. The cabin door is pushed open and* CHRIS *appears. He is dressed in yellow oilskins—coat, pants, sou'wester—and wears high sea-boots.*

CHRIS (*the glare from the cabin still in his eyes, peers blinkingly astern*): Anna! (*Receiving no reply, he calls again, this time with apparent apprehension*) Anna!

ANNA (*with a start—making a gesture with her hand as if to impose silence—in a hushed whisper*): Yes, here I am. What d'you want?

CHRIS (*walks over to her—solicitously*): Don't you come turn in, Anna? It's late—after four bells. It ain't good for you stay out here in fog, Ay tank.

ANNA: Why not? (*With a trace of strange exultation*) I love this fog! Honest! It's so— (*She hesitates, groping for a word*) Funny and still. I feel as if I was—out of things altogether.

CHRIS (*spitting disgustedly*): Fog's vorst one of her dirty tricks, py yingo!

ANNA (*with a short laugh*): Beefing about the sea again? I'm getting so's I love it, the little I've seen.

CHRIS (*glancing at her moodily*): Dat's foolish talk, Anna. You see her more, you don't talk dat vay. (*Then seeing her irritation, he hastily adopts a more cheerful tone*) But Ay'm glad you like it on barge. Ay'm glad it makes you feel good again. (*With a placating grin*) You like live like dis alone with ole fa'der, eh?

ANNA: Sure I do. Everything's been so different from anything I ever come across before. And now—this fog— Gee, I wouldn't have missed it for nothing. I never thought living on ships was so different from land. Gee, I'd yust love to work on it, honest I would, if I was a man. I don't wonder you always been a sailor.

CHRIS (*vehemently*): Ay ain't sailor, Anna. And dis ain't real sea. You only see nice part. (*Then as she doesn't answer, he continues hopefully*) Vell, fog lift in morning, Ay tank.

ANNA (*the exultation again in her voice*): I love it! I don't give a rap if it never lifts! (CHRIS *fidgets from one foot to the other worriedly.* ANNA *continues slowly, after a pause*) It makes me feel clean—out here—'s if I'd taken a bath.

CHRIS (*after a pause*): You better go in cabin read book. Dat put you to sleep.

ANNA: I don't want to sleep. I want to stay out here—and think about things.

CHRIS (*walks away from her toward the cabin—then comes back*): You act funny tonight, Anna.

ANNA (*her voice rising angrily*): Say, what're you trying to do—make things rotten? You been kind as kind can be to me and I certainly appreciate it—only don't spoil it all now. (*Then, seeing the hurt expression on her father's face, she forces a smile*) Let's talk of something else. Come. Sit down here. (*She points to the coil of rope.*)

CHRIS (*sits down beside her with a sigh*): It's gatting pooty late in night, Anna. Must be near five bells.

ANNA (*interestedly*): Five bells? What time is that?

CHRIS: Half past ten.

ANNA: Funny I don't know nothing about sea talk—but those cousins was always talking crops and that stuff. Gee, wasn't I sick of it—and of them!

CHRIS: You don't like live on farm, Anna?

ANNA: I've told you a hundred times I hated it. (*Decidedly*) I'd rather have one drop of ocean than all the farms in the world! Honest! And you wouldn't like a farm, neither. Here's where you belong. (*She makes a sweeping gesture seaward*) But not on a coal barge. You belong on a real ship, sailing all over the world.

CHRIS (*moodily*): Ay've done dat many year, Anna, when Ay vas damn fool.

ANNA (*disgustedly*): Oh, rats! (*After a pause she speaks musingly*) Was the men in our family always sailors—as far back as you know about?

CHRIS (*shortly*): Yes. Damn fools! All men in our village on coast, Sveden, go to sea. Ain't nutting else for dem to do. My fa'der die on board ship in Indian Ocean. He's buried at sea. Ay don't never know him only little bit. Den my tree bro'der, older'n me, dey go on ships. Den Ay go, too. Den my mo'der she's left all 'lone. She die pooty quick after dat—all 'lone. Ve vas all avay on voyage when she die. (*He pauses sadly*) Two my bro'der dey gat lost on fishing boat same like your bro'ders vas drowned. My oder bro'der, he save money, give up sea, den he die home in bed. He's only one dat ole davil don't kill. (*Defiantly*) But me, Ay bet you Ay die ashore in bed, too!

ANNA: Were all of 'em yust plain sailors?

CHRIS: Able body seaman, most of dem. (*With a certain pride*) Dey vas all smart seaman, too—A one. (*Then after hesitating a moment—shyly*) Ay vas bo'sun.

ANNA: Bo'sun?

CHRIS: Dat's kind of officer.

ANNA: Gee, that was fine. What does he do?

CHRIS (*after a second's hesitation, plunged into gloom again by his fear of her enthusiasm*): Hard vork all time. It's rotten, Ay tal you, for go to sea. (*Determined to disgust her with sea life—volubly*) Dey're all fool fallar, dem fallar in our family. Dey all work rotten yob on sea for nutting, don't care nutting but yust gat big pay day in pocket, gat drunk, gat robbed, ship avay again on oder voyage. Dey don't come home. Dey don't do anytang like good man do. And dat ole davil, sea, sooner, later she svallow dem up.

ANNA (*with an excited laugh*): Good sports, I'd call 'em. (*Then hastily*) But say—listen—did all the women of the family marry sailors?

CHRIS (*eagerly—seeing a chance to drive home his point*): Yes—and it's bad on dem like hell vorst of all. Dey don't see deir men only once in long while. Dey set and vait all 'lone. And vhen deir boys grows up, go to sea, dey sit and vait some more. (*Vehemently*) Any gel marry sailor, she's crazy fool! Your mo'der she tal you same tang if she vas alive. (*He relapses into an attitude of somber brooding.*)

ANNA (*after a pause—dreamily*): Funny! I do feel sort of—nutty, tonight. I feel old.

CHRIS (*mystified*): Ole?

ANNA: Sure—like I'd been living a long, long time—out here in the fog. (*Frowning perplexedly*) I don't know how to tell you yust what I mean. It's like I'd come home after a long visit away some place. It all seems like I'd been here before lots of times—on boats—in this same fog. (*With a short laugh*) You must think I'm off my base.

CHRIS (*gruffly*): Anybody feel funny dat vay in fog.

ANNA (*persistently*): But why d'you s'pose I feel so—so—like I'd found something I'd missed and been looking for—'s if this was the right place for me to fit in? And I seem to have forgot—everything that's happened—like it didn't matter no more. And I feel clean, somehow—like you feel yust after you've took a bath. And I feel happy for once—yes, honest!—happier than I ever have been anywhere before! (*As* CHRIS *makes no comment but a heavy sigh, she continues wonderingly*) It's nutty for me to feel that way, don't you think?

CHRIS (*a grim foreboding in his voice*): Ay tank Ay'm damn fool for bring you on voyage, Anna.

ANNA (*impressed by his tone*): You talk—nutty tonight yourself. You act 's if you was scared something was going to happen.

CHRIS: Only God know dat, Anna.

ANNA (*half-mockingly*): Then it'll be Gawd's will, like the preachers say—what does happen.

CHRIS (*starts to his feet with fierce protest*): No! Dat ole davil, sea, she ain't God! (*In the pause of silence that comes after his defiance a hail in a man's husky, exhausted voice comes faintly out of the fog to port.* "Ahoy!" CHRIS *gives a startled exclamation.*)

ANNA (*jumping to her feet*): What's that?

CHRIS (*who has regained his composure—sheepishly*): Py golly, dat scare me for minute. It's only some fallar hail, Anna—loose his course in fog. Must be fisherman's power boat. His engine break down, Ay guess. (*The "ahoy" comes again through the wall of fog, sounding much nearer this time.* CHRIS *goes over to the port bulwark*) Sound from dis side. She come in from open sea. (*He holds his hands to his mouth, megaphone-fashion, and shouts back*) Ahoy, dere! What's trouble?

THE VOICE (*this time sounding nearer but up forward toward the bow*): Heave a rope when we come alongside. (*Then irritably*) Where are ye, ye scut?

CHRIS: Ay hear dem rowing. Dey come up by bow, Ay tank. (*Then shouting out again*) Dis vay!

THE VOICE: Right ye are! (*There is a muffled sound of oars in oar-locks.*)

ANNA (*half to herself—resentfully*): Why don't that guy stay where he belongs?

CHRIS (*hurriedly*): Ay go up bow. All hands asleep 'cepting fallar on vatch. Ay gat heave line to dat fallar. (*He picks up a coil of rope and hurries off toward the bow.* ANNA *walks back toward the extreme stern as if she wanted to remain as much isolated as possible. She turns her back on the proceedings and stares out into the fog.* THE VOICE *is heard again shouting "Ahoy" and* CHRIS *answering "Dis vay." Then there is a pause—the murmur of excited voices—then the*

scuffling of feet. CHRIS *appears from around the cabin to port. He is supporting the limp form of a man dressed in dungarees, holding one of the man's arms around his neck. The deckhand,* JOHNSON, *a young blond Swede, follows him, helping along another exhausted man similar fashion.* ANNA *turns to look at them.* CHRIS *stops for a second—volubly*) Anna! You come help, vill you? You find vhisky in cabin. Dese fallars need drink for fix dem. Dey vas near dead.

ANNA (*hurrying to him*): Sure—but who are they? What's the trouble?

CHRIS: Sailor fallars. Deir steamer gat wrecked. Dey been five days in open boat—four fallars—only one left able stand up. Come, Anna. (*She precedes him into the cabin, holding the door open while he and* JOHNSON *carry in their burdens. The door is shut, then opened again as* JOHNSON *comes out.* CHRIS' *voice shouts after him*) Go gat oder fallar, Yohnson.

JOHNSON: Yes, sir. (*He goes. The door is closed again.* MAT BURKE *stumbles in around the port side of the cabin. He moves slowly, feeling his way uncertainly, keeping hold of the port bulwark with his right hand to steady himself. He is stripped to the waist, has on nothing but a pair of dirty dungaree pants. He is a powerful, broad-chested six-footer, his face handsome in a hard, rough, bold, defiant way. He is about thirty, in the full power of his heavy-muscled, immense strength. His dark eyes are bloodshot and wild for sleeplessness. The muscles of his arms and shoulders are lumped in knots and bunches, the veins of his fore-arms stand out like blue cords. He finds his way to the coil of hawser and sits down on it facing the cabin, his back bowed, head in his hands, in an attitude of spent weariness.*)

BURKE (*talking aloud to himself*): Row, ye divil! Row! (*Then lifting his head and looking about him*) What's this tub? Well, we're safe anyway—with the help of God. (*He makes the sign of the cross mechanically.* JOHNSON *comes along the deck to port, supporting the fourth man, who is babbling to himself incoherently.* BURKE *glances at him disdainfully*) Is it losing the small wits ye iver had, ye are? Deck-scrubbing scut! (*They pass him and go into the cabin, leaving the door open.* BURKE *sags forward wearily*) I'm bate out—bate out entirely.

ANNA (*comes out of the cabin with a tumbler quarter-full of whisky in her hand. She gives a start when she sees* BURKE *so near her, the light from the open door falling full on him. Then, overcoming what*

is evidently a feeling of repulsion, she comes up beside him): Here you are. Here's a drink for you. You need it, I guess.

BURKE (*lifting his head slowly—confusedly*): Is it dreaming I am?

ANNA (*half smiling*): Drink it and you'll find it ain't no dream.

BURKE: To hell with the drink—but I'll take it just the same. (*He tosses it down*) Ahah! I'm needin' that—and 'tis fine stuff. (*Looking up at her with frank, grinning admiration*) But 'twasn't the booze I meant when I said, was I dreaming. I thought you was some mermaid out of the sea come to torment me. (*He reaches out to feel of her arm*) Aye, rale flesh and blood, divil a less.

ANNA (*coldly. Stepping back from him*): Cut that.

BURKE: But tell me, isn't this a barge I'm on—or isn't it?

ANNA: Sure.

BURKE: And what is a fine handsome woman the like of you doing on this scow?

ANNA (*coldly*): Never you mind. (*Then half-amused in spite of herself*) Say, you're a great one, honest—starting right in kidding after what you been through.

BURKE (*delighted—proudly*): Ah, it was nothing—aisy for a rale man with guts to him, the like of me. (*He laughs*) All in the day's work, darlin'. (*Then, more seriously but still in a boastful tone, confidentially*) But I won't be denying 'twas a damn narrow squeak. We'd all ought to be with Davy Jones at the bottom of the sea, be rights. And only for me, I'm telling you, and the great strength and guts is in me, we'd be being scoffed by the fishes this minute!

ANNA (*contemptuously*): Gee, you hate yourself, don't you? (*Then turning away from him indifferently*) Well, you'd better come in and lie down. You must want to sleep.

BURKE (*stung—rising unsteadily to his feet with chest out and head thrown back—resentfully*): Lie down and sleep, is it? Divil a wink I'm after having for two days and nights and divil a bit I'm needing now. Let you not be thinking I'm the like of them three weak scuts come in the boat with me. I could lick the three of them sitting down

with one hand tied behind me. They may be bate out, but I'm not —and I've been rowing the boat with them lying in the bottom not able to raise a hand for the last two days we was in it. (*Furiously, as he sees this is making no impression on her*) And I can lick all hands on this tub, wan be wan, tired as I am!

ANNA (*sarcastically*): Gee, ain't you a hard guy! (*Then, with a trace of sympathy, as she notices him swaying from weakness*) But never mind that fight talk. I'll take your word for all you've said. Go on and sit down out here, anyway, if I can't get you to come inside. (*He sits down weakly*) You're all in, you might as well own up to it.

BURKE (*fiercely*): The hell I am!

ANNA (*coldly*): Well, be stubborn then for all I care. And I must say I don't care for your language. The men I know don't pull that rough stuff when ladies are around.

BURKE (*getting unsteadily to his feet again—in a rage*): Ladies! Ho-ho! Divil mend you!. Let you not be making game of me. What would ladies be doing on this bloody hulk? (*As* ANNA *attempts to go to the cabin, he lurches into her path*) Aisy, now! You're not the old Square-head's woman, I suppose you'll be telling me next—living in his cabin with him, no less! (*Seeing the cold, hostile expression on* ANNA'S *face, he suddenly changes his tone to one of boisterous joviality*) But I do be thinking, iver since the first look my eyes took at you, that it's a fool you are to be wasting yourself—a fine, handsome girl—on a stumpy runt of a man like that old Swede. There's too many strapping great lads on the sea would give their heart's blood for one kiss of you!

ANNA (*scornfully*): Lads like you, eh?

BURKE (*grinning*): Ye take the words out o' my mouth. I'm the proper lad for you, if it's meself do be saying it. (*With a quick movement he puts his arms about her waist*) Whisht, now, me daisy! Himself's in the cabin. It's wan of your kisses I'm needing to take the tiredness from me bones. Wan kiss, now! (*He presses her to him and attempts to kiss her.*)

ANNA (*struggling fiercely*): Leggo of me, you big mutt! (*She pushes him away with all her might.* BURKE, *weak and tottering, is caught off his guard. He is thrown down backward and, in falling, hits his head a hard thump against the bulwark. He lies there still, knocked*

out for the moment. ANNA *stands for a second, looking down at him frightenedly. Then she kneels down beside him and raises his head to her knee, staring into his face anxiously for some sign of life.)*

BURKE (*stirring a bit—mutteringly*): God stiffen it! (*He opens his eyes and blinks up at her with vague wonder.*)

ANNA (*letting his head sink back on the deck, rising to her feet with a sigh of relief*): You're coming to all right, eh? Gee, I was scared for a moment I'd killed you.

BURKE (*with difficulty rising to a sitting position—scornfully*): Killed, is it? It'd take more than a bit of a blow to crack my thick skull. (*Then looking at her with the most intense admiration*) But, glory be, it's a power of strength is in them two fine arms of yours. There's not a man in the world can say the same as you, that he seen Mat Burke lying at his feet and him dead to the world.

ANNA (*rather remorsefully*): Forget it. I'm sorry it happened, see? (*Burke rises and sits on bench. Then severely*) Only you had no right to be getting fresh with me. Listen, now, and don't go getting any more wrong notions. I'm on this barge because I'm making a trip with my father. The captain's my father. Now you know.

BURKE: The old square—the old Swede, I mean?

ANNA: Yes.

BURKE (*rising—peering at her face*): Sure I might have known it, if I wasn't a bloody fool from birth. Where else'd you get that fine yellow hair is like a golden crown on your head.

ANNA (*with an amused laugh*): Say, nothing stops you, does it? (*Then attempting a severe tone again*) But don't you think you ought to be apologizing for what you said and done yust a minute ago, instead of trying to kid me with that mush?

BURKE (*indignantly*): Mush! (*Then bending forward toward her with very intense earnestness*) Indade and I will ask your pardon a thousand times—and on my knees, if ye like. I didn't mean a word of what I said or did. (*Resentful again for a second*) But divil a woman in all the ports of the world has iver made a great fool of me that way before!

ANNA (*with amused sarcasm*): I see. You mean you're a lady-killer and they all fall for you.

BURKE (*offended. Passionately*): Leave off your fooling! 'Tis that is after getting my back up at you. (*Earnestly*) 'Tis no lie I'm telling you about the women. (*Ruefully*) Though it's a great jackass I am to be mistaking you, even in anger, for the like of them cows on the waterfront is the only women I've met up with since I was growed to a man. (*As* ANNA *shrinks away from him at this, he hurries on pleadingly*) I'm a hard, rough man and I'm not fit, I'm thinking, to be kissing the shoe-soles of a fine, dacent girl the like of yourself. 'Tis only the ignorance of your kind made me see you wrong. So you'll forgive me, for the love of God, and let us be friends from this out. (*Passionately*) I'm thinking I'd rather be friends with you than have my wish for anything else in the world. (*He holds out his hand to her shyly.*)

ANNA (*looking queerly at him, perplexed and worried, but moved and pleased in spite of herself—takes his hand uncertainly*): Sure.

BURKE (*with boyish delight*): God bless you! (*In his excitement he squeezes her hand tight.*)

ANNA: Ouch!

BURKE (*hastily dropping her hand—ruefully*): Your pardon, Miss. 'Tis a clumsy ape I am. (*Then simply—glancing down his arm proudly*) It's great power I have in my hand and arm, and I do be forgetting it at times.

ANNA (*nursing her crushed hand and glancing at his arm, not without a trace of his own admiration*): Gee, you're some strong, all right.

BURKE (*delighted*): It's no lie, and why shouldn't I be, with me shoveling a million tons of coal in the stokeholes of ships since I was a lad only. (*He pats the coil of hawser invitingly*) Let you sit down, now, Miss, and I'll be telling you a bit of myself, and you'll be telling me a bit of yourself, and in an hour we'll be as old friends as if we was born in the same house. (*He pulls at her sleeve shyly*) Sit down now, if you plaze.

ANNA (*with a half laugh*): Well— (*She sits down*) But we won't

talk about me, see? You tell me about yourself and about the wreck.

BURKE (*flattered*): I'll tell you, surely. But can I be asking you one question, Miss, has my head in a puzzle?

ANNA (*guardedly*): Well—I dunno—what is it?

BURKE: What is it you do when you're not taking a trip with the Old Man? For I'm thinking a fine girl the like of you ain't living always on this tub.

ANNA (*uneasily*): No—of course I ain't. (*She searches his face suspiciously, afraid there may be some hidden insinuation in his words. Seeing his simple frankness, she goes on confidently*) Well, I'll tell you. I'm a governess, see? I take care of kids for people and learn them things.

BURKE (*impressed*): A governess, is it? You must be smart, surely.

ANNA: Let's not talk about me. Tell me about the wreck, like you promised me you would.

BURKE (*importantly*): 'Twas this way, Miss. Two weeks out we ran into the divil's own storm, and she sprang wan hell of a leak up for'ard. The skipper was hoping to make Boston before another blow would finish her, but ten days back we met up with another storm the like of the first, only worse. Four days we was in it with green seas raking over her from bow to stern. That was a terrible time, God help us. (*Proudly*) And if 'twasn't for me and my great strength, I'm telling you—and it's God's truth—there'd been mutiny itself in the stokehole. 'Twas me held them to it, with a kick to wan and a clout to another, and they not caring a damn for the engineers any more, but fearing a clout of my right arm more than they'd fear the sea itself. (*He glances at her anxiously, eager for her approval.*)

ANNA (*concealing a smile—amused by this boyish boasting of his*): You did some hard work, didn't you?

BURKE (*promptly*): I did that! I'm a divil for sticking it out when them that's weak give up. But much good it did anyone! 'Twas a mad, fightin' scramble in the last seconds with each man for himself. I disremember how it come about, but there was the four of us in

wan boat and when we raised high on a great wave I took a look about and divil a sight there was of ship or men on top of the sea.

ANNA (*in a subdued voice*): Then all the others was drowned?

BURKE: They was, surely.

ANNA (*with a shudder*): What a terrible end!

BURKE (*turns to her*): A terrible end for the like of them swabs does live on land, maybe. But for the like of us does be roaming the seas, a good end, I'm telling you—quick and clane.

ANNA (*struck by the word*): Yes, clean. That's yust the word for—all of it—the way it makes me feel.

BURKE: The sea, you mean? (*Interestedly*) I'm thinking you have a bit of it in your blood, too. Your Old Man wasn't only a barge rat—begging your pardon—all his life, by the cut of him.

ANNA: No, he was bo'sun on sailing ships for years. And all the men on both sides of the family have gone to sea as far back as he remembers, he says. All the women have married sailors, too.

BURKE (*with intense satisfaction*): Did they, now? They had spirit in them. It's only on the sea you'd find rale men with guts is fit to wed with fine, high-tempered girls (*then he adds half-boldly*) the like of yourself.

ANNA (*with a laugh*): There you go kiddin' again. (*Then seeing his hurt expression—quickly*) But you was going to tell me about yourself. You're Irish, of course I can tell that.

BURKE (*stoutly*): Yes, thank God, though I've not seen a sight of it in fifteen years or more.

ANNA (*thoughtfully*): Sailors never do go home hardly, do they? That's what my father was saying.

BURKE: He wasn't telling no lie. (*With sudden melancholy*) It's a hard and lonesome life, the sea is. The only women you'd meet in the ports of the world who'd be willing to speak you a kind word isn't woman at all. You know the kind I mane, and they're a poor, wicked

lot, God forgive them. They're looking to steal the money from you only.

ANNA (*her face averted—rising to her feet—agitatedly*): I think—I guess I'd better see what's doing inside.

BURKE (*afraid he has offended her—beseechingly*): Don't go, I'm saying! Is it I've given you offense with the talk of the like of them? Don't heed it at all! I'm clumsy in my wits when it comes to talking proper with a girl the like of you. And why wouldn't I be? Since the day I left home for to go to sea punching coal, this is the first time I've had a word with a rale, dacent woman. So don't turn your back on me now, and we beginning to be friends.

ANNA (*turning to him again—forcing a smile*): I'm not sore at you, honest.

BURKE (*gratefully*): God bless you!

ANNA (*changing the subject abruptly*): But if you honestly think the sea's such a rotten life, why don't you get out of it?

BURKE (*surprised*): Work on land, is it? (*She nods. He spits scornfully*) Digging spuds in the muck from dawn to dark, I suppose? (*Vehemently*) I wasn't made for it, Miss.

ANNA (*with a laugh*): I thought you'd say that.

BURKE (*argumentatively*): But there's good jobs and bad jobs at sea, like there'd be on land. I'm thinking if it's in the stokehole of a proper liner I was, I'd be able to have a little house and be home to it wan week out of four. And I'm thinking that maybe then I'd have the luck to find a fine dacent girl—the like of yourself, now—would be willing to wed with me.

ANNA (*turning away from him with a short laugh—uneasily*): Why, sure. Why not?

BURKE (*edging up close to her—exultantly*): Then you think a girl the like of yourself might maybe not mind the past at all but only be seeing the good herself put in me?

ANNA (*in the same tone*): Why, sure.

BURKE (*passionately*): She'd not be sorry for it, I'd take my oath! 'Tis no more drinking and roving about I'd be doing then, but giving my pay day into her hand and staying at home with her as meek as a lamb each night of the week I'd be in port.

ANNA (*moved in spite of herself and troubled by this half-concealed proposal—with a forced laugh*): All you got to do is find the girl.

BURKE: I have found her!

ANNA (*half-frightenedly—trying to laugh it off*): You have? When? I thought you was saying—

BURKE (*boldly and forcefully*): This night. (*Hanging his head—humbly*) If she'll be having me. (*Then raising his eyes to hers—simply*) 'Tis you I mean.

ANNA (*is held by his eyes for a moment—then shrinks back from him with a strange, broken laugh*): Say—are you—going crazy? Are you trying to kid me? Proposing—to me!—for Gawd's sake!—on such short acquaintance? (CHRIS *comes out of the cabin and stands staring blinkingly astern. When he makes out* ANNA *in such intimate proximity to this strange sailor, an angry expression comes over his face.*)

BURKE (*following her—with fierce, pleading insistence*): I'm telling you there's the will of God in it that brought me safe through the storm and fog to the wan spot in the world where you was! Think of that now, and isn't it queer—

CHRIS: Anna! (*He comes toward them, raging, his fists clenched*) Anna, you gat in cabin, you hear!

ANNA (*all her emotions immediately transformed into resentment at his bullying tone*): Who d'you think you're talking to—a slave?

CHRIS (*hurt—his voice breaking—pleadingly*): You need gat rest, Anna. You gat sleep. (*She does not move. He turns on* BURKE *furiously*) What you doing here, you sailor fallar? You ain't sick like oders. You gat in fo'c'stle. Dey give you bunk. (*Threateningly*) You hurry, Ay tal you!

ANNA (*impulsively*): But he is sick. Look at him. Look at him. He can hardly stand up.

BURKE (*straightening and throwing out his chest—with a bold laugh*): Is it giving me orders ye are, me bucko? Let you look out, then! With wan hand, weak as I am, I can break ye in two and fling the pieces over the side—and your crew after you. (*Stopping abruptly*) I was forgetting. You're her Old Man and I'd not raise a fist to you for the world. (*His knees sag, he wavers and seems about to fall.* ANNA *utters an exclamation of alarm and hurries to his side.*)

ANNA (*taking one of his arms over her shoulder*): Come on in the cabin. You can have my bed if there ain't no other place.

BURKE (*with jubilant happiness—as they proceed toward the cabin*): Glory be to God, is it holding my arm about your neck you are! Anna! Anna! Sure it's a sweet name is suited to you.

ANNA (*guiding him carefully*): Sssh! Sssh!

BURKE: Whisht, is it? Indade, and I'll not. I'll be roaring it out like a fog horn over the sea! You're the girl of the world and we'll be marrying soon and I don't care who knows it!

ANNA (*as she guides him through the cabin door*): Ssshh! Never mind that talk. You go to sleep. (*They go out of sight in the cabin.* CHRIS, *who has been listening to* BURKE'S *last words with open-mouthed amazement, stands looking after them desperately.*)

CHRIS (*turns suddenly and shakes his fist out at the sea—with bitter hatred*): Dat's your dirty trick, damn ole davil, you! (*Then in a frenzy of rage*) But, py God, you don't do dat! Not vhile Ay'm living! No, py God, you don't!

(*The Curtain Falls.*)

Act Three

SCENE: *The interior of the cabin on the barge,* Simeon Winthrop *(at dock in Boston)—a narrow, low-ceilinged compartment the walls of which are painted a light brown with white trimmings. In the rear on the left, a door leading to the sleeping quarters. In the far left corner, a large locker-closet, painted white, on the door of which a mirror hangs on a nail. In the rear wall, two small square windows and a door opening out on the deck toward the stern. In the right wall, two more windows looking out on the port deck. White curtains, clean and stiff, are at the windows. A table with two cane-bottomed chairs stands in the center of the cabin. A dilapidated, wicker rocker, painted brown, is also by the table.*

It is afternoon of a sunny day about a week later. From the harbor and docks outside, muffled by the closed door and windows, comes the sound of steamers' whistles and the puffing snort of the donkey engines of some ship unloading nearby.

As the curtain rises, CHRIS *and* ANNA *are discovered.* ANNA *is seated in the rocking-chair by the table, with a newspaper in her hands. She is not reading but staring straight in front of her. She looks unhappy, troubled, frowningly concentrated on her thoughts.* CHRIS *wanders about the room, casting quick, uneasy side glances at her face, then stopping to peer absent-mindedly out of the window. His attitude betrays an overwhelming, gloomy anxiety which has him on tenter-hooks. He pretends to be engaged in setting things ship-shape, but this occupation is confined to picking up some object, staring at it stupidly for a second, then aimlessly putting it down again. He clears his throat and starts to sing to himself in a low, doleful voice: "My Yosephine, come board de ship. Long time Ay vait for you."*

ANNA (*turning on him, sarcastically*): I'm glad someone's feeling good. (*Wearily*) Gee, I sure wish we was out of this dump and back in New York.

CHRIS (*with a sigh*): Ay'm glad vhen ve sail again, too. (*Then, as she makes no comment, he goes on with a ponderous attempt at sarcasm*) Ay don't see vhy you don't like Boston, dough. You have good time

here, Ay tank. You go ashore all time, every day and night veek ve've been here. You go to movies, see show, gat all kinds fun—(*His eyes hard with hatred*) All with that damn Irish fallar!

ANNA (*with weary scorn*): Oh, for heaven's sake, are you off on that again? Where's the harm in his taking me around? D'you want me to sit all day and night in this cabin with you—and knit? Ain't I got a right to have as good a time as I can?

CHRIS: It ain't right kind of fun—not with that fallar, no.

ANNA: I been back on board every night by eleven, ain't I? (*Then struck by some thought—looks at him with keen suspicion—with rising anger*) Say, look here, what d'you mean by what you yust said?

CHRIS (*hastily*): Nutting but what Ay say, Anna.

ANNA: You said "ain't right" and you said it funny. Say, listen here, you ain't trying to insinuate that there's something wrong between us, are you?

CHRIS (*horrified*): No, Anna! No, Ay svear to God, Ay never tank dat!

ANNA (*mollified by his very evident sincerity—sitting down again*): Well, don't you never think it neither if you want me ever to speak to you again. (*Angrily again*) If I ever dreamt you thought that, I'd get the hell out of this barge so quick you couldn't see me for dust.

CHRIS (*soothingly*): Ay wouldn't never dream— (*Then after a second's pause, reprovingly*) You vas getting learn to svear. Dat ain't nice for young gel, you tank?

ANNA (*with a faint trace of a smile*): Excuse me. You ain't used to such language, I know. (*Mockingly*) That's what your taking me to sea has done for me.

CHRIS (*indignantly*): No, it ain't me. It's dat damn sailor fallar learn you bad tangs.

ANNA: He ain't a sailor. He's a stoker.

CHRIS (*forcibly*): Dat vas million times vorse, Ay tal you! Dem

fallars dat vork below shoveling coal vas de dirtiest, rough gang of no-good fallars in vorld!

ANNA: I'd hate to hear you say that to Mat.

CHRIS: Oh, Ay tal him same tang. You don't gat it in head Ay'm scared of him yust 'cause he vas stronger'n Ay vas. (*Menacingly*) You don't gat for fight with fists with dem fallars. Dere's oder vay for fix him.

ANNA (*glancing at him with sudden alarm*): What d'you mean?

CHRIS (*sullenly*): Nutting.

ANNA: You'd better not. I wouldn't start no trouble with him if I was you. He might forget some time that you was old and my father—and then you'd be out of luck.

CHRIS (*with smoldering hatred*): Vell, yust let him! Ay'm ole bird maybe, but Ay bet Ay show him trick or two.

ANNA (*suddenly changing her tone—persuasively*): Aw come on, be good. What's eating you, anyway? Don't you want no one to be nice to me except yourself?

CHRIS (*placated—coming to her—eagerly*): Yes, Ay do, Anna—only not fallar on sea. But Ay like for you marry steady fallar got good yob on land. You have little home in country all your own—

ANNA (*rising to her feet—brusquely*): Oh, cut it out! (*Scornfully*) Little home in the country! I wish you could have seen the little home in the country where you had me in jail till I was sixteen! (*With rising irritation*) Some day you're going to get me so mad with that talk, I'm going to turn loose on you and tell you—a lot of things that'll open your eyes.

CHRIS (*alarmed*): Ay don't vant—

ANNA: I know you don't; but you keep on talking yust the same.

CHRIS: Ay don't talk no more den, Anna.

ANNA: Then promise me you'll cut out saying nasty things about Mat Burke every chance you get.

CHRIS (*evasive and suspicious*): Vhy? You like dat fallar—very much, Anna?

ANNA: Yes, I certainly do! He's a regular man, no matter what faults he's got. One of his fingers is worth all the hundreds of men I met out there—inland.

CHRIS (*his face darkening*): Maybe you tank you love him, den?

ANNA (*defiantly*): What of it if I do?

CHRIS (*scowling and forcing out the words*): Maybe—you tank you —marry him?

ANNA (*shaking her head*): No! (CHRIS' *face lights up with relief.* ANNA *continues slowly, a trace of sadness in her voice*) If I'd met him four years ago—or even two years ago—I'd have jumped at the chance, I tell you that straight. And I would now—only he's such a simple guy—a big kid—and I ain't got the heart to fool him. (*She breaks off suddenly*) But don't never say again he ain't good enough for me. It's me ain't good enough for him.

CHRIS (*snorts scornfully*): Py yiminy, you go crazy, Ay tank!

ANNA (*with a mournful laugh*): Well, I been thinking I was myself the last few days. (*She goes and takes a shawl from a hook near the door and throws it over her shoulders*) Guess I'll take a walk down to the end of the dock for a minute and see what's doing. I love to watch the ships passing. Mat'll be along before long, I guess. Tell him where I am, will you?

CHRIS (*despondently*): All right, Ay tal him. (ANNA *goes out the doorway in rear.* CHRIS *follows her out and stands on the deck outside for a moment looking after her. Then he comes back inside and shuts the door. He stands looking out of the window—mutters—"Dirty ole davil, you." Then he goes to the table, sets the cloth straight mechanically, picks up the newspaper* ANNA *has let fall to the floor and sits down in the rocking-chair. He stares at the paper for a while, then puts it on table, holds his head in his hands and sighs drearily. The noise of a man's heavy footsteps comes from the deck outside and there is a loud knock on the door.* CHRIS *starts, makes a move as if to get up and go to the door, then thinks better of it and sits still. The knock is repeated—then as no answer comes, the door is flung open and* MAT BURKE *appears.* CHRIS *scowls at the intruder and his*

hand instinctively goes back to the sheath knife on his hip. BURKE *is dressed up—wears a cheap blue suit, a striped cotton shirt with a black tie, and black shoes newly shined. His face is beaming with good humor.*)

BURKE (*as he sees* CHRIS—*in a jovial tone of mockery*): Well, God bless who's here! (*He bends down and squeezes his huge form through the narrow doorway*) And how is the world treating you this afternoon, Anna's father?

CHRIS (*sullenly*): Pooty goot—if it ain't for some fallars.

BURKE (*with a grin*): Meaning me, do you? (*He laughs*) Well, if you ain't the funny old crank of a man! (*Then soberly*) Where's herself? (CHRIS *sits dumb, scowling, his eyes averted.* BURKE *is irritated by this silence*) Where's Anna, I'm after asking you?

CHRIS (*hesitating—then grouchily*): She go down end of dock.

BURKE: I'll be going down to her, then. But first I'm thinking I'll take this chance when we're alone to have a word with you. (*He sits down opposite* CHRIS *at the table and leans over toward him*) And that word is soon said. I'm marrying your Anna before this day is out, and you might as well make up your mind to it whether you like it or no.

CHRIS (*glaring at him with hatred and forcing a scornful laugh*): Ho-ho! Dat's easy for say!

BURKE: You mean I won't? (*Scornfully*) Is it the like of yourself will stop me, are you thinking?

CHRIS: Yes, Ay stop it, if it come to vorst.

BURKE (*with scornful pity*): God help you!

CHRIS: But ain't no need for me do dat. Anna—

BURKE (*smiling confidently*): Is it Anna you think will prevent me?

CHRIS: Yes.

BURKE: And I'm telling you she'll not. She knows I'm loving her, and she loves me the same, and I know it.

CHRIS: Ho-ho! She only have fun. She make big fool of you, dat's all!

BURKE (*unshaken—pleasantly*): That's a lie in your throat, divil mend you!

CHRIS: No, it ain't lie. She tal me yust before she go out she never marry fallar like you.

BURKE: I'll not believe it. 'Tis a great old liar you are, and a divil to be making a power of trouble if you had your way. But 'tis not trouble I'm looking for, and me sitting down here. (*Earnestly*) Let us be talking it out now as man to man. You're her father, and wouldn't it be a shame for us to be at each other's throats like a pair of dogs, and I married with Anna? So out with the truth, man alive. What is it you're holding against me at all?

CHRIS (*a bit placated, in spite of himself, by* BURKE's *evident sincerity —but puzzled and suspicious*): Vell—Ay don't vant for Anna get married. Listen, you fallar. Ay'm a ole man. Ay don't see Anna for fifteen year. She vas all Ay gat in vorld. And now ven she come on first trip—you tank Ay vant her leave me 'lone again?

BURKE (*heartily*): Let you not be thinking I have no heart at all for the way you'd be feeling.

CHRIS (*astonished and encouraged—trying to plead persuasively*): Den you do right tang, eh? You ship away again, leave Anna alone. (*Cajolingly*) Big fallar like you dat's on sea, he don't need vife. He gat new gel in every port, you know dat.

BURKE (*angrily for a second*): God stiffen you! (*Then controlling himself—calmly*) I'll not be giving you the lie on that. But divil take you, there's a time comes to every man, on sea or land, that isn't a born fool, when he's sick of the lot of them cows, and wearing his heart out to meet up with a fine dacent girl, and have a home to call his own and be rearing up children in it. 'Tis small use you're asking me to leave Anna. She's the wan woman of the world for me, and I can't live without her now, I'm thinking.

CHRIS: You forgat all about her in one week out of port, Ay bet you!

BURKE: You don't know the like I am. Death itself wouldn't make me forget her. So let you not be making talk to me about leaving her. I'll not, and be damned to you! It won't be so bad for you as

you'd make out at all. She'll be living here in the States, and her married to me. And you'd be seeing her often so—a sight more often than ever you saw her the fifteen years she was growing up in the West. It's quare you'd be the one to be making great trouble about her leaving you when you never laid eyes on her once in all them years.

CHRIS (*guiltily*): Ay taught it vas better Anna stay away, grow up inland vhere she don't ever know ole davil, sea.

BURKE (*scornfully*): Is it blaming the sea for your troubles ye are again, God help you? Well, Anna knows it now. 'Twas in her blood, anyway.

CHRIS: And Ay don't vant she ever know no-good fallar on sea—

BURKE: She knows one now.

CHRIS (*banging the table with his fist—furiously*): Dat's yust it! Dat's yust what you are—no-good sailor fallar! You tank Ay lat her life be made sorry by you like her mo'der's vas by me! No, Ay svear! She don't marry you if Ay gat kill you first!

BURKE (*looks at him a moment, in astonishment—then laughing uproariously*): Ho-ho! Glory be to God, it's bold talk you have for a stumpy runt of a man!

CHRIS (*threateningly*): Vell—you see!

BURKE (*with grinning defiance*): I'll see, surely! I'll see myself and Anna married this day, I'm telling you. (*Then with contemptuous exasperation*) It's quare fool's blather you have about the sea done this and the sea done that. You'd ought to be 'shamed to be saying the like, and you an old sailor yourself. I'm after hearing a lot of it from you and a lot more that Anna's told me you do be saying to her, and I'm thinking it's a poor weak thing you are, and not a man at all!

CHRIS (*darkly*): You see if Ay'm man—maybe quicker'n you tank.

BURKE (*contemptuously*): Yerra, don't be boasting. I'm thinking 'tis out of your wits you've got with fright of the sea. You'd be wishing Anna married to a farmer, she told me. That'd be a swate match, surely! Would you have a fine girl the like of Anna lying down at nights with a muddy scut stinking of pigs and dung? Or would you

have her tied for life to the like of them skinny, shriveled swabs does be working in cities?

CHRIS: Dat's lie, you fool!

BURKE: 'Tis not. 'Tis your own mad notions I'm after telling. But you know the truth in your heart, if great fear of the sea has made you a liar and coward itself. (*Pounding the table*) The sea's the only life for a man with guts in him isn't afraid of his own shadow! 'Tis only on the sea he's free, and him roving the face of the world, seeing all things, and not giving a damn for saving up money, or stealing from his friends, or any of the black tricks that a landlubber'd waste his life on. 'Twas yourself knew it once, and you a bo'sun for years.

CHRIS (*sputtering with rage*): You vas crazy fool, Ay tal you!

BURKE: You've swallowed the anchor. The sea gives you a clout once, knocked you down, and you're not man enough to get up for another, but lie there for the rest of your life howling bloody murder. (*Proudly*) Isn't it myself the sea has nearly drowned, and me battered and bate till I was that close to hell I could hear the flames roaring, and never a groan out of me till the sea gave up and it seeing the great strength and guts of a man was in me?

CHRIS (*scornfully*): Yes, you vas hell of fellar, hear you tal it!

BURKE (*angrily*): You'll be calling me a liar once too often, me old bucko! Wasn't the whole story of it and my picture itself in the newspapers of Boston a week back? (*Looking* CHRIS *up and down belittlingly*) Sure I'd like to see you in the best of your youth do the like of what I done in the storm and after. 'Tis a mad lunatic, screeching with fear, you'd be this minute!

CHRIS: Ho-ho! You vas young fool! In ole years when Ay vas on windyammer, Ay vas through hundred storms vorse'n dat! Ships vas ships den—and men dat sail on dem vas real men. And now what you gat on steamers? You gat fallars on deck don't know ship from mudscow. (*With a meaning glance at* BURKE) And below deck you gat fallars yust know how for shovel coal—might yust as vell vork on coal vagon ashore!

BURKE (*stung—angrily*): Is it casting insults at the men in the stokehole ye are, ye old ape? God stiffen you! Wan of them is worth any ten stock-fish-swilling Square-heads ever shipped on a windbag!

CHRIS (*his face working with rage, his hand going back to the sheath-knife on his hip*): Irish swine, you!

BURKE (*tauntingly*): Don't ye like the Irish, ye old baboon? 'Tis that you're needing in your family, I'm telling you—an Irishman and a man of the stokehole—to put guts in it so that you'll not be having grandchildren would be fearful cowards and jackasses the like of yourself!

CHRIS (*half rising from his chair—in a voice choked with rage*): You look out!

BURKE (*watching him intently—a mocking smile on his lips*): And it's that you'll be having, no matter what you'll do to prevent; for Anna and me'll be married this day, and no old fool the like of you will stop us when I've made up my mind.

CHRIS (*with a hoarse cry*): You don't! (*He throws himself at* BURKE, *knife in hand, knocking his chair over backward.* BURKE *springs to his feet quickly in time to meet the attack. He laughs with the pure love of battle. The old Swede is like a child in his hands.* BURKE *does not strike or mistreat him in any way, but simply twists his right hand behind his back and forces the knife from his fingers. He throws the knife into a far corner of the room—tauntingly.*)

BURKE: Old men is getting childish shouldn't play with knives. (*Holding the struggling* CHRIS *at arm's length—with a sudden rush of anger, drawing back his fist*) I've half a mind to hit you a great clout will put sense in your square head. Kape off me now, I'm warning you! (*He gives* CHRIS *a push with the flat of his hand which sends the old Swede staggering back against the cabin wall, where he remains standing, panting heavily, his eyes fixed on* BURKE *with hatred, as if he were only collecting his strength to rush at him again.*)

BURKE (*warningly*): Now don't be coming at me again, I'm saying, or I'll flatten you on the floor with a blow, if 'tis Anna's father you are itself! I've not patience left for you. (*Then with an amused laugh*) Well, 'tis a bold old man you are just the same, and I'd never think it was in you to come tackling me alone. (*A shadow crosses the cabin windows. Both men start.* ANNA *appears in the doorway.*)

ANNA (*with pleased surprise as she sees* BURKE): Hello, Mat. Are you here already? I was down— (*She stops, looking from one to the other, sensing immediately that something has happened*) What's

up? (*Then noticing the overturned chair—in alarm*) How'd that chair get knocked over? (*Turning on* BURKE *reproachfully*) You ain't been fighting with him, Mat—after you promised?

BURKE (*his old self again*): I've not laid a hand on him, Anna. (*He goes and picks up the chair, then turning on the still questioning* ANNA—*With a reassuring smile*) Let you not be worried at all. 'Twas only a bit of an argument we was having to pass the time till you'd come.

ANNA: It must have been some argument when you got to throwing chairs. (*She turns on* CHRIS) Why don't you say something? What was it about?

CHRIS (*relaxing at last—avoiding her eyes—sheepishly*): Ve vas talking about ships and fallars on sea.

ANNA (*with a relieved smile*): Oh—the old stuff, eh?

BURKE (*suddenly seeming to come to a bold decision—with a defiant grin at* CHRIS): He's not after telling you the whole of it. We was arguing about you mostly.

ANNA (*with a frown*): About me?

BURKE: And we'll be finishing it out right here and now in your presence if you're willing. (*He sits down at the left of table.*)

ANNA (*uncertainly—looking from him to her father*): Sure. Tell me what it's all about.

CHRIS (*advancing toward the table—protesting to* BURKE): No! You don't do dat, you! You tal him you don't vant for hear him talk, Anna.

ANNA: But I do. I want this cleared up.

CHRIS (*miserably afraid now*): Vell, not now, anyvay. You vas going ashore, yes? You ain't got time—

ANNA (*firmly*): Yes, right here and now. (*She turns to* BURKE) You tell me, Mat, since he don't want to.

BURKE (*draws a deep breath—then plunges in boldly*): The whole

of it's in a few words only. So's he'd make no mistake, and him hating the sight of me, I told him in his teeth I loved you. (*Passionately*) And that's God's truth, Anna, and well you know it!

CHRIS (*scornfully—forcing a laugh*): Ho-ho! He tal same tang to gel every port he go!

ANNA (*shrinking from her father with repulsion—resentfully*): Shut up, can't you? (*Then to* BURKE—*feelingly*) I know it's true, Mat. I don't mind what he says.

BURKE (*humbly grateful*): God bless you!

ANNA: And then what?

BURKE: And then— (*Hesitatingly*) And then I said— (*He looks at her pleadingly*) I said I was sure—I told him I thought you have a bit of love for me, too. (*Passionately*) Say you do, Anna! Let you not destroy me entirely, for the love of God! (*He grasps both her hands in his two.*)

ANNA (*deeply moved and troubled—forcing a trembling laugh*): So you told him that, Mat? No wonder he was mad. (*Forcing out the words*) Well, maybe it's true, Mat. Maybe I do. I been thinking and thinking—I didn't want to, Mat, I'll own up to that—I tried to cut it out—but— (*She laughs helplessly*) I guess I can't help it anyhow. So I guess I do, Mat. (*Then with a sudden joyous defiance*) Sure I do! What's the use of kidding myself different? Sure I love you, Mat!

CHRIS (*with a cry of pain*): Anna! (*He sits crushed.*)

BURKE (*with a great depth of sincerity in his humble gratitude*): God be praised!

ANNA (*assertively*): And I ain't never loved a man in my life before, you can always believe that—no matter what happens.

BURKE (*goes over to her and puts his arms around her*): Sure I do be believing ivery word you iver said or iver will say. And 'tis you and me will be having a grand, beautiful life together to the end of our days! (*He tries to kiss her. At first she turns away her head—then, overcome by a fierce impulse of passionate love, she takes his*

head in both her hands and holds his face close to hers, staring into his eyes. Then she kisses him full on the lips.)

ANNA (*pushing him away from her—forcing a broken laugh*): Good-by. (*She walks to the doorway in rear—stands with her back toward them, looking out. Her shoulders quiver once or twice as if she were fighting back her sobs.*)

BURKE (*too in the seventh heaven of bliss to get any correct interpretation of her word—with a laugh*): Good-by, is it? The divil you say! I'll be coming back at you in a second for more of the same! (*To* CHRIS, *who has quickened to instant attention at his daughter's good-by, and has looked back at her with a stirring of foolish hope in his eyes*) Now, me old bucko, what'll you be saying? You heard the words from her own lips. Confess I've bate you. Own up like a man when you're bate fair and square. And here's my hand to you—(*Holds out his hand*) And let you take it and we'll shake and forget what's over and done, and be friends from this out.

CHRIS (*with implacable hatred*): Ay don't shake hands with you fallar—not vhile Ay live!

BURKE (*offended*): The back of my hand to you then, if that suits you better. (*Growling*) 'Tis a rotten bad loser you are, divil mend you!

CHRIS: Ay don't lose. (*Trying to be scornful and self-convincing*) Anna say she like you little bit but you don't hear her say she marry you, Ay bet. (*At the sound of her name* ANNA *has turned round to them. Her face is composed and calm again, but it is the dead calm of despair.*)

BURKE (*scornfully*): No, and I wasn't hearing her say the sun is shining either.

CHRIS (*doggedly*): Dat's all right. She don't say it, yust same.

ANNA (*quietly—coming forward to them*): No, I didn't say it, Mat.

CHRIS (*eagerly*): Dere! You hear!

BURKE (*misunderstanding her—with a grin*): You're waiting till you do be asked, you mane? Well, I'm asking you now. And we'll be married this day, with the help of God!

ANNA (*gently*): You heard what I said, Mat—after I kissed you?

BURKE (*alarmed by something in her manner*): No—I disremember.

ANNA: I said good-by. (*Her voice trembling*) That kiss was for good-by, Mat.

BURKE (*terrified*): What d'you mane?

ANNA: I can't marry you, Mat—and we've said good-by. That's all.

CHRIS (*unable to hold back his exultation*): Ay know it! Ay know dat vas so!

BURKE (*jumping to his feet—unable to believe his ears*): Anna! Is it making game of me you'd be? 'Tis a quare time to joke with me, and don't be doing it, for the love of God.

ANNA (*looking him in the eyes—steadily*): D'you think I'd kid you? No, I'm not joking, Mat. I mean what I said.

BURKE: Ye don't! Ye can't! 'Tis mad you are, I'm telling you!

ANNA (*fixedly*): No, I'm not.

BURKE (*desperately*): But what's come over you so sudden? You was saying you loved me—

ANNA: I'll say that as often as you want me to. It's true.

BURKE (*bewilderedly*): Then why—what, in the divil's name—Oh, God help me, I can't make head or tail to it at all!

ANNA: Because it's the best way out I can figure, Mat. (*Her voice catching*) I been thinking it over and thinking it over day and night all week. Don't think it ain't hard on me, too, Mat.

BURKE: For the love of God, tell me then, what is it that's preventing you wedding me when the two of us has love? (*Suddenly getting an idea and pointing at* CHRIS—*exasperatedly*) Is it giving heed to the like of that old fool ye are, and him hating me and filling your ears full of bloody lies against me?

CHRIS (*getting to his feet—raging triumphantly before* ANNA *has a*

chance to get in a word): Yes, Anna believe me, not you! She know her old fa'der don't lie like you.

ANNA (*turning on her father angrily*): You sit down, d'you hear? Where do you come in butting in and making things worse? You're like a devil, you are! (*Harshly*) Good Lord, and I was beginning to like you, beginning to forget all I've got held up against you!

CHRIS (*crushed feebly*): You ain't got nutting for hold against me, Anna.

ANNA: Ain't I yust! Well, lemme tell you— (*She glances at* BURKE *and stops abruptly*) Say, Mat, I'm s'prised at you. You didn't think anything he'd said—

BURKE (*glumly*): Sure, what else would it be?

ANNA: Think I've ever paid any attention to all his crazy bull? Gee, you must take me for a five-year-old kid.

BURKE (*puzzled and beginning to be irritated at her too*): I don't know how to take you, with your saying this one minute and that the next.

ANNA: Well, he has nothing to do with it.

BURKE: Then what is it has? Tell me, and don't keep me waiting and sweating blood.

ANNA (*resolutely*): I can't tell you—and I won't. I got a good reason —and that's all you need to know. I can't marry you, that's all there is to it. (*Distractedly*) So, for Gawd's sake, let's talk of something else.

BURKE: I'll not! (*Then fearfully*) Is it married to someone else you are—in the West maybe?

ANNA (*vehemently*): I should say not.

BURKE (*regaining his courage*): To the divil with all other reasons then. They don't matter with me at all. (*He gets to his feet confidently, assuming a masterful tone*) I'm thinking you're the like of them women can't make up their mind till they're drove to it. Well, then, I'll make up your mind for you bloody quick. (*He takes her*

by the arms, grinning to soften his serious bullying) We've had enough of talk! Let you be going into your room now and be dressing in your best and we'll be going ashore.

CHRIS (*aroused—angrily*): No, py God, she don't do that! (*Takes hold of her arm.*)

ANNA (*who has listened to* BURKE *in astonishment. She draws away from him, instinctively repelled by his tone, but not exactly sure if he is serious or not—a trace of resentment in her voice*): Say, where do you get that stuff?

BURKE (*imperiously*): Never mind, now! Let you go get dressed, I'm saying. (*Then turning to* CHRIS) We'll be seeing who'll win in the end—me or you.

CHRIS (*to* ANNA—*also in an authoritative tone*): You stay right here, Anna, you hear! (ANNA *stands looking from one to the other of them as if she thought they had both gone crazy. Then the expression of her face freezes into the hardened sneer of her experience.*)

BURKE (*violently*): She'll not! She'll do what I say! You've had your hold on her long enough. It's my turn now.

ANNA (*with a hard laugh*): Your turn? Say, what am I, anyway?

BURKE: 'Tis not what you are, 'tis what you're going to be this day —and that's wedded to me before night comes. Hurry up now with your dressing.

CHRIS (*commandingly*): You don't do one tang he say, Anna! (ANNA *laughs mockingly.*)

BURKE: She will, so!

CHRIS: Ay tal you she don't! Ay'm her fa'der.

BURKE: She will in spite of you. She's taking my orders from this out, not yours.

ANNA (*laughing again*): Orders is good!

BURKE (*turning to her impatiently*): Hurry up now, and shake a leg.

We've no time to be wasting. (*Irritated as she doesn't move*) Do you hear what I'm telling you?

CHRIS: You stay dere, Anna!

ANNA (*at the end of her patience—blazing out at them passionately*): You can go to hell, both of you! (*There is something in her tone that makes them forget their quarrel and turn to her in a stunned amazement.* ANNA *laughs wildly*) You're just like all the rest of them —you two! Gawd, you'd think I was a piece of furniture! I'll show you! Sit down now! (*As they hesitate—furiously*) Sit down and let me talk for a minute. You're all wrong, see? Listen to me! I'm going to tell you something—and then I'm going to beat it. (*To* BURKE—*with a harsh laugh*) I'm going to tell you a funny story, so pay attention. (*Pointing to* CHRIS) I've been meaning to turn it loose on him every time he'd get my goat with his bull about keeping me safe inland. I wasn't going to tell you, but you've forced me into it. What's the dif? It's all wrong anyway, and you might as well get cured that way as any other. (*With hard mocking*) Only don't forget what you said a minute ago about it not mattering to you what other reason I got so long as I wasn't married to no one else.

BURKE (*manfully*): That's my word, and I'll stick to it!

ANNA (*laughing bitterly*): What a chance! You make me laugh, honest! Want to bet you will? Wait 'n see! (*She stands at the table rear, looking from one to the other of the two men with her hard, mocking smile. Then she begins, fighting to control her emotion and speak calmly*) First thing is, I want to tell you two guys something. You was going on 's if one of you had got to own me. But nobody owns me, see?—'cepting myself. I'll do what I please and no man, I don't give a hoot who he is, can tell me what to do! I ain't asking either of you for a living. I can make it myself—one way or other. I'm my own boss. So put that in your pipe and smoke it! You and your orders!

BURKE (*protestingly*): I wasn't meaning it that way at all and well you know it. You've no call to be raising this rumpus with me. (*Pointing to* CHRIS) 'Tis him you've a right—

ANNA: I'm coming to him. But you—you did mean it that way, too. You sounded—yust like all the rest. (*Hysterically*) But, damn it, shut up! Let me talk for a change!

BURKE: 'Tis quare, rough talk, that—for a dacent girl the like of you!

ANNA (*with a hard laugh*): Decent? Who told you I was? (CHRIS *is sitting with bowed shoulders, his head in his hands. She leans over him in exasperation and shakes him violently by the shoulder*) Don't go to sleep, Old Man! Listen here, I'm talking to you now!

CHRIS (*straightening up and looking about as if he were seeking a way to escape—with frightened foreboding in his voice*): Ay don't vant for hear it. You vas going out of head, Ay tank, Anna.

ANNA (*violently*): Well, living with you is enough to drive anyone off their nut. Your bunk about the farm being so fine! Didn't I write you year after year how rotten it was and what a dirty slave them cousins made of me? What'd you care? Nothing! Not even enough to come out and see me! That crazy bull about wanting to keep me away from the sea don't go down with me! You yust didn't want to be bothered with me! You're like all the rest of 'em!

CHRIS (*feebly*): Anna! It ain't so—

ANNA (*not heeding his interruption—revengefully*): But one thing I never wrote you. It was one of them cousins that you think is such nice people—the youngest son—Paul—that started me wrong. (*Loudly*) It wasn't none of my fault. I hated him worse'n hell and he knew it. But he was big and strong—(*pointing to* BURKE)—like you!

BURKE (*half springing to his feet—his fists clenched*): God blarst it! (*He sinks slowly back in his chair again, the knuckles showing white on his clenched hands, his face tense with the effort to suppress his grief and rage.*)

CHRIS (*in a cry of horrified pain*): Anna!

ANNA (*to him—seeming not to have heard their interruptions*): That was why I run away from the farm. That was what made me get a yob as nurse girl in St. Paul. (*With a hard, mocking laugh*) And you think that was a nice yob for a girl, too, don't you? (*Sarcastically*) With all of them nice inland fellers yust looking for a chance to marry me, I s'pose. Marry me? What a chance! They wasn't looking for marrying. (*As* BURKE *lets a groan of fury escape him—desperately*) I'm owning up to everything fair and square. I was caged in, I tell you—yust like in yail—taking care of other people's kids—

listening to 'em bawling and crying day and night—when I wanted to be out—and I was lonesome—lonesome as hell! (*With a sudden weariness in her voice*) So I give up finally. What was the use? (*She stops and looks at the two men. Both are motionless and silent.* CHRIS *seems in a stupor of despair, his house of cards fallen about him.* BURKE'S *face is livid with the rage that is eating him up, but he is too stunned and bewildered yet to find a vent for it. The condemnation she feels in their silence goads* ANNA *into a harsh, strident defiance*) You don't say nothing—either of you—but I know what you're thinking. You're like all the rest! (*To* CHRIS—*furiously*) And who's to blame for it, me or you? If you'd even acted like a man—if you'd even had been a regular father and had me with you—maybe things would be different!

CHRIS (*in agony*): Don't talk dat vay, Anna! Ay go crazy! Ay von't listen! (*Puts his hands over his ears.*)

ANNA (*infuriated by his action—stridently*): You will too listen! (*She leans over and pulls his hands from his ears—with hysterical rage*) You—keeping me safe inland—I wasn't no nurse girl the last two years—I lied when I wrote you—I was in a house, that's what!—yes, that kind of a house—the kind sailors like you and Mat goes to in port—and your nice inland men, too—and all men, God damn 'em! I hate 'em! Hate 'em! (*She breaks into hysterical sobbing, throwing herself into the chair and hiding her face in her hands on the table. The two men have sprung to their feet.*)

CHRIS (*whimpering like a child*): Anna! Anna! It's a lie! It's a lie! (*He stands wringing his hands together and begins to weep.*)

BURKE (*his whole great body tense like a spring—dully and gropingly*): So that's what's in it!

ANNA (*raising her head at the sound of his voice—with extreme mocking bitterness*): I s'pose you remember your promise, Mat? No other reason was to count with you so long as I wasn't married already. So I s'pose you want me to get dressed and go ashore, don't you? (*She laughs*) Yes, you do!

BURKE (*on the verge of his outbreak—stammeringly*): God stiffen you!

ANNA (*trying to keep up her hard, bitter tone, but gradually letting a note of pitiful pleading creep in*): I s'pose if I tried to tell you I

wasn't—that—no more you'd believe me, wouldn't you? Yes, you would! And if I told you that yust getting out in this barge, and being on the sea had changed me and made me feel different about things, 's if all I'd been through wasn't me and didn't count and was yust like it never happened—you'd laugh, wouldn't you? And you'd die laughing sure if I said that meeting you that funny way that night in the fog, and afterwards seeing that you was straight goods stuck on me, had got me to thinking for the first time, and I sized you up as a different kind of man—a sea man as different from the ones on land as water is from mud—and that was why I got stuck on you, too. I wanted to marry you and fool you, but I couldn't. Don't you see how I've changed? I couldn't marry you with you believing a lie—and I was ashamed to tell you the truth—till the both of you forced my hand, and I seen you was the same as all the rest. And now, give me a bawling out and beat it, like I can tell you're going to. (*She stops, looking at* BURKE. *He is silent, his face averted, his features beginning to work with fury. She pleads passionately*) Will you believe it if I tell you that loving you has made me—clean? It's the straight goods, honest! (*Then as he doesn't reply—bitterly*) Like hell you will! You're like all the rest!

BURKE (*blazing out—turning on her in a perfect frenzy of rage—his voice trembling with passion*): The rest, is it? God's curse on you! Clane, is it? You slut, you, I'll be killing you now! (*He picks up the chair on which he has been sitting and, swinging it high over his shoulder, springs toward her.* CHRIS *rushes forward with a cry of alarm, trying to ward off the blow from his daughter.* ANNA *looks up into* BURKE'S *eyes with the fearlessness of despair.* BURKE *checks himself, the chair held in the air.*)

CHRIS (*wildly*): Stop, you crazy fool! You vant for murder her!

ANNA (*pushing her father away brusquely, her eyes still holding* BURKE'S): Keep out of this, you! (*To* BURKE—*dully*) Well, ain't you got the nerve to do it? Go ahead! I'll be thankful to you, honest. I'm sick of the whole game.

BURKE (*throwing the chair away into a corner of the room—helplessly*): I can't do it, God help me, and your two eyes looking at me. (*Furiously*) Though I do be thinking I'd have a good right to smash your skull like a rotten egg. Was there iver a woman in the world had the rottenness in her that you have, and was there iver a man the like of me was made the fool of the world, and me thinking

thoughts about you, and having great love for you, and dreaming dreams of the fine life we'd have when we'd be wedded! (*His voice high pitched in a lamentation that is like a keen*) Yerra, God help me! I'm destroyed entirely and my heart is broken in bits! I'm asking God Himself, was it for this He'd have me roaming the earth since I was a lad only, to come to black shame in the end, where I'd be giving a power of love to a woman is the same as others you'd meet in any hooker-shanty in port, with red gowns on them and paint on their grinning mugs, would be sleeping with any man for a dollar or two!

ANNA (*in a scream*): Don't, Mat! For Gawd's sake! (*Then raging and pounding on the table with her hands*) Get out of here! Leave me alone! Get out of here!

BURKE (*his anger rushing back on him*): I'll be going, surely! And I'll be drinking sloos of whisky will wash that black kiss of yours off my lips; and I'll be getting dead rotten drunk so I'll not remember if 'twas iver born you was at all; and I'll be shipping away on some boat will take me to the other end of the world where I'll never see your face again! (*He turns toward the door.*)

CHRIS (*who has been standing in a stupor—suddenly grasping* BURKE *by the arm—stupidly*): No, you don't go. Ay tank maybe it's better Anna marry you now.

BURKE (*shaking* CHRIS *off—furiously*): Lave go of me, ye old ape! Marry her, is it? I'd see her roasting in hell first! I'm shipping away out of this, I'm telling you! (*Pointing to* ANNA*—passionately*) And my curse on you and the curse of Almighty God and all the Saints! You've destroyed me this day and may you lie awake in the long nights, tormented with thoughts of Mat Burke and the great wrong you've done him!

ANNA (*in anguish*): Mat! (*But he turns without another word and strides out of the doorway.* ANNA *looks after him wildly, starts to run after him, then hides her face in her outstretched arms, sobbing.* CHRIS *stands in a stupor, staring at the floor.*)

CHRIS (*after a pause, dully*): Ay tank Ay go ashore, too.

ANNA (*looking up, wildly*): Not after him! Let him go! Don't you dare—

CHRIS (*somberly*): Ay go for gat drink.

ANNA (*with a harsh laugh*): So I'm driving you to drink, too, eh? I s'pose you want to get drunk so's you can forget—like him?

CHRIS (*bursting out angrily*): Yes, Ay vant! You tank Ay like hear dem tangs. (*Breaking down—weeping*) Ay tank you vasn't dat kind of gel, Anna.

ANNA (*mockingly*): And I s'pose you want me to beat it, don't you? You don't want me here disgracing you, I s'pose?

CHRIS: No, you stay here! (*Goes over and pats her on the shoulder, the tears running down his face*) Ain't your fault, Anna, Ay know dat. (*She looks up at him, softened. He bursts into rage*) It's dat ole davil, sea, do this to me! (*He shakes his fist at the door*) It's her dirty tricks! It vas all right on barge with yust you and me. Den she bring dat Irish fallar in fog, she make you like him, she make you fight with me all time! If dat Irish fallar don't never come, you don't never tal me dem tangs, Ay don't never know, and everytang's all right. (*He shakes his fist again*) Dirty old davil!

ANNA (*with spent weariness*): Oh, what's the use? Go on ashore and get drunk.

CHRIS (*goes into room on left and gets his cap. He goes to the door, silent and stupid—then turns*): You vait here, Anna?

ANNA (*dully*): Maybe—and maybe not. Maybe I'll get drunk, too. Maybe I'll— But what the hell do you care what I do? Go on and beat it. (CHRIS *turns stupidly and goes out.* ANNA *sits at the table, staring straight in front of her.*)

(*The Curtain Falls.*)

Act Four

SCENE: *Same as Act Three, about nine o'clock of a foggy night two days later. The whistles of steamers in the harbor can be heard. The cabin is lighted by a small lamp on the table. A suitcase stands in the middle of the floor.* ANNA *is sitting in the rocking-chair. She wears a hat, is all dressed up as in Act One. Her face is pale, looks terribly tired and worn, as if the two days just past had been ones of suffering and sleepless nights. She stares before her despondently, her chin in her hands. There is a timid knock on the door in rear.* ANNA *jumps to her feet with a startled exclamation and looks toward the door with an expression of mingled hope and fear.*

ANNA (*faintly*): Come in. (*Then summoning her courage—more resolutely*) Come in. (*The door is opened and* CHRIS *appears in the doorway. He is in a very bleary, bedraggled condition, suffering from the after-effects of his drunk. A tin pail full of foaming beer is in his hand. He comes forward, his eyes avoiding* ANNA'S. *He mutters stupidly*) It's foggy.

ANNA (*looking him over with contempt*): So you come back at last, did you? You're a fine-looking sight! (*Then jeeringly*) I thought you'd beaten it for good on account of the disgrace I'd brought on you.

CHRIS (*wincing—faintly*): Don't say dat, Anna, please! (*He sits in a chair by the table, setting down the can of beer, holding his head in his hands.*)

ANNA (*looks at him with a certain sympathy*): What's the trouble? Feeling sick?

CHRIS (*dully*): Inside my head feel sick.

ANNA: Well, what d'you expect after being soused for two days? (*Resentfully*) It serves you right. A fine thing—you leaving me alone on this barge all that time!

CHRIS (*humbly*): Ay'm sorry, Anna.

ANNA (*scornfully*): Sorry!

CHRIS: But Ay'm not sick inside head vay you mean. Ay'm sick from tank too much about you, about me.

ANNA: And how about me? D'you suppose I ain't been thinking, too?

CHRIS: Ay'm sorry, Anna. (*He sees her bag and gives a start*) You pack your bag, Anna? You vas going—?

ANNA (*forcibly*): Yes, I was going right back to what you think.

CHRIS: Anna!

ANNA: I went ashore to get a train for New York. I'd been waiting and waiting till I was sick of it. Then I changed my mind and decided not to go today. But I'm going first thing tomorrow, so it'll all be the same in the end.

CHRIS (*raising his head—pleadingly*): No, you never do dat, Anna!

ANNA (*with a sneer*): Why not, I'd like to know?

CHRIS: You don't never gat to do—dat vay—no more, Ay tal you. Ay fix dat up all right.

ANNA (*suspiciously*): Fix what up?

CHRIS (*not seeming to have heard her question—sadly*): You vas vaiting, you say? You vasn't vaiting for me, Ay bet.

ANNA (*callously*): You'd win.

CHRIS: For dat Irish fallar?

ANNA (*defiantly*): Yes—if you want to know! (*Then with a forlorn laugh*) If he did come back it'd only be 'cause he wanted to beat me up or kill me, I suppose. But even if he did, I'd rather have him come than not show up at all. I wouldn't care what he did.

CHRIS: Ay guess it's true you vas in love with him all right.

ANNA: You guess!

CHRIS (*turning to her earnestly*): And Ay'm sorry for you like hell he don't come, Anna!

ANNA (*softened*): Seems to me you've changed your tune a lot.

CHRIS: Ay've been tanking, and Ay guess it vas all my fault—all bad tangs dat happen to you. (*Pleadingly*) You try for not hate me, Anna. Ay'm crazy ole fool, dat's all.

ANNA: Who said I hated you?

CHRIS: Ay'm sorry for everytang Ay do wrong for you, Anna. Ay vant for you be happy all rest of your life for make up! It make you happy marry dat Irish fallar, Ay vant it, too.

ANNA (*dully*): Well, there ain't no chance. But I'm glad you think different about it, anyway.

CHRIS (*supplicatingly*): And you tank—maybe—you forgive me sometime?

ANNA (*with a wan smile*): I'll forgive you right now.

CHRIS (*seizing her hand and kissing it—brokenly*): Anna lilla! Anna lilla!

ANNA (*touched but a bit embarrassed*): Don't bawl about it. There ain't nothing to forgive, anyway. It ain't your fault, and it ain't mine, and it ain't his neither. We're all poor nuts, and things happen, and we yust get mixed in wrong, that's all.

CHRIS (*eagerly*): You say right tang, Anna, py golly! It ain't nobody's fault! (*Shaking his fist*) It's dat ole davil sea!

ANNA (*with an exasperated laugh*): Gee, won't you ever can that stuff? (CHRIS *relapses into injured silence. After a pause* ANNA *continues curiously*) You said a minute ago you'd fixed something up—about me. What was it?

CHRIS (*after a hesitating pause*): Ay'm shipping avay on sea again, Anna.

ANNA (*astounded*): You're—what?

CHRIS: Ay sign on steamer sail tomorrow. Ay gat my ole yob—bo'sun. (ANNA *stares at him. As he goes on, a bitter smile comes over her face*) Ay tank dat's best tang for you. Ay only bring you bad luck, Ay tank. Ay make your mo'der's life sorry. Ay don't vant make yours dat way, but Ay do yust same. Dat ole davil, sea, she make me Yonah man ain't no good for nobody. And Ay tank now it ain't no use fight with sea. No man dat live going to beat her, py yingo!

ANNA (*with a laugh of helpless bitterness*): So that's how you've fixed me, is it?

CHRIS: Yes, Ay tank if dat ole davil gat me back she leave you alone den.

ANNA (*bitterly*): But, for Gawd's sake, don't you see you're doing the same thing you've always done? Don't you see—? (*But she sees the look of obsessed stubbornness on her father's face and gives it up helplessly*) But what's the use of talking? You ain't right, that's what. I'll never blame you for nothing no more. But how you could figure out that was fixing me—!

CHRIS: Dat ain't all. Ay gat dem fallars in steamship office to pay you all money coming to me every month vhile Ay'm avay.

ANNA (*with a hard laugh*): Thanks. But I guess I won't be hard up for no small change.

CHRIS (*hurt—humbly*): It ain't much, Ay know, but it's plenty for keep you so you never gat go back—

ANNA (*shortly*): Shut up, will you? We'll talk about it later, see?

CHRIS (*after a pause—ingratiatingly*): You like Ay go ashore look for dat Irish fallar, Anna?

ANNA (*angrily*): Not much! Think I want to drag him back?

CHRIS (*after a pause—uncomfortably*): Py golly, dat booze don't go vell. Give me fever, Ay tank. Ay feel hot like hell. (*He takes off his coat and lets it drop on the floor. There is a loud thud.*)

ANNA (*with a start*): What you got in your pocket, for Pete's sake—a

ton of lead? (*She reaches down, takes the coat and pulls out a revolver—looks from it to him in amazement*) A gun? What were you doing with this?

CHRIS (*sheepishly*): Ay forget. Ain't nothing. Ain't loaded, anyvay.

ANNA (*breaking it open to make sure—then closing it again—looking at him suspiciously*): That ain't telling me why you got it?

CHRIS: Ay'm ole fool. Ay got it when Ay go ashore first. Ay tank den it's all fault of dat Irish fallar.

ANNA (*with a shudder*): Say, you're crazier than I thought. I never dreamt you'd go that far.

CHRIS (*quickly*): Ay don't. Ay gat better sense right avay. Ay don't never buy bullets even. It ain't his fault, Ay know.

ANNA (*still suspicious of him*): Well, I'll take care of this for a while, loaded or not. (*She puts it in the drawer of table and closes the drawer.*)

CHRIS (*placatingly*): Throw it overboard if you vant. Ay don't care. (*Then after a pause*) Py golly, Ay tank Ay go lie down. Ay feel sick. (ANNA *takes a magazine from the table.* CHRIS *hesitates by her chair*) Ve talk again before Ay go, yes?

ANNA (*dully*): Where's this ship going to?

CHRIS: Cape Town. Dat's in South Africa. She's British steamer called *Londonderry*. (*He stands hesitatingly—finally blurts out*) Anna—you forgive me sure?

ANNA (*wearily*): Sure I do. You ain't to blame. You're yust—what you are—like me.

CHRIS (*pleadingly*): Den—you lat me kiss you again once?

ANNA (*raising her face—forcing a wan smile*): Sure. No hard feelings.

CHRIS (*kisses her brokenly*): Anna lilla! Ay— (*He fights for words to express himself, but finds none—miserably—with a sob*) Ay can't say it. Good night, Anna.

ANNA: Good night. (*He picks up the can of beer and goes slowly into the room on left, his shoulders bowed, his head sunk forward dejectedly. He closes the door after him.* ANNA *turns over the pages of the magazine, trying desperately to banish her thoughts by looking at the pictures. This fails to distract her, and flinging the magazine back on the table, she springs to her feet and walks about the cabin distractedly, clenching and unclenching her hands. She speaks aloud to herself in a tense, trembling voice*) Gawd, I can't stand this much longer! What am I waiting for anyway?—like a damn fool! (*She laughs helplessly, then checks herself abruptly, as she hears the sound of heavy footsteps on the deck outside. She appears to recognize these and her face lights up with joy. She gasps*) Mat! (*A strange terror seems suddenly to seize her. She rushes to the table, takes the revolver out of drawer and crouches down in the corner, left, behind the cupboard. A moment later the door is flung open and* MAT BURKE *appears in the doorway. He is in bad shape—his clothes torn and dirty, covered with sawdust as if he had been groveling or sleeping on barroom floors. There is a red bruise on his forehead over one of his eyes, another over one cheekbone, his knuckles are skinned and raw—plain evidence of the fighting he has been through on his "bat." His eyes are bloodshot and heavy-lidded, his face has a bloated look. But beyond these appearances—the results of heavy drinking—there is an expression in his eyes of wild mental turmoil, of impotent animal rage baffled by its own abject misery.*)

BURKE (*peers blinkingly about the cabin—hoarsely*): Let you not be hiding from me, whoever's here—though 'tis well you know I'd have a right to come back and murder you. (*He stops to listen. Hearing no sound, he closes the door behind him and comes forward to the table. He throws himself into the rocking-chair—despondently*) There's no one here, I'm thinking, and 'tis a great fool I am to be coming. (*With a sort of dumb, uncomprehending anguish*) Yerra, Mat Burke, 'tis a great jackass you've become and what's got into you at all, at all? She's gone out of this long ago, I'm telling you, and you'll never see her face again. (ANNA *stands up, hesitating, struggling between joy and fear.* BURKE'S *eyes fall on* ANNA'S *bag. He leans over to examine it*) What's this? (*Joyfully*) It's hers. She's not gone! But where is she? Ashore? (*Darkly*) What would she be doing ashore on this rotten night? (*His face suddenly convulsed with grief and rage*) 'Tis that, is it? Oh, God's curse on her! (*Raging*) I'll wait till she comes and choke her dirty life out. (ANNA *starts, her face grows hard. She steps into the room, the revolver in her right hand by her side.*)

ANNA (*in a cold, hard tone*): What are you doing here?

BURKE (*wheeling about with a terrified gasp*): Glory be to God! (*They remain motionless and silent for a moment, holding each other's eyes.*)

ANNA (*in the same hard voice*): Well, can't you talk?

BURKE (*trying to fall into an easy, careless tone*): You've a year's growth scared out of me, coming at me so sudden and me thinking I was alone.

ANNA: You've got your nerve butting in here without knocking or nothing. What d'you want?

BURKE (*airily*): Oh, nothing much. I was wanting to have a last word with you, that's all. (*He moves a step toward her.*)

ANNA (*sharply—raising the revolver in her hand*): Careful now! Don't try getting too close. I heard what you said you'd do to me.

BURKE (*noticing the revolver for the first time*): Is it murdering me you'd be now, God forgive you? (*Then with a contemptuous laugh*) Or is it thinking I'd be frightened by that old tin whistle? (*He walks straight for her.*)

ANNA (*wildly*): Look out, I tell you!

BURKE (*who has come so close that the revolver is almost touching his chest*): Let you shoot, then! (*Then with sudden wild grief*) Let you shoot, I'm saying, and be done with it! Let you end me with a shot and I'll be thanking you, for it's a rotten dog's life I've lived the past two days since I've known what you are, till I'm after wishing I was never born at all!

ANNA (*overcome—letting the revolver drop to the floor, as if her fingers had no strength to hold it—hysterically*): What d'you want coming here? Why don't you beat it? Go on! (*She passes him and sinks down in the rocking-chair.*)

BURKE (*following her—mournfully*): 'Tis right you'd be asking why did I come. (*Then angrily*) 'Tis because 'tis a great weak fool of the world I am, and me tormented with the wickedness you'd told of

yourself, and drinking oceans of booze that'd make me forget. Forget? Divil a word I'd forget, and your face grinning always in front of my eyes, awake or asleep, till I do be thinking a madhouse is the proper place for me.

ANNA (*glancing at his hands and face—scornfully*): You look like you ought to be put away some place. Wonder you wasn't pulled in. You been scrapping, too, ain't you?

BURKE: I have—with every scut would take off his coat to me! (*Fiercely*) And each time I'd be hitting one a clout in the mug, it wasn't his face I'd be seeing at all, but yours, and me wanting to drive you a blow would knock you out of this world where I wouldn't be seeing or thinking more of you.

ANNA (*her lips trembling pitifully*): Thanks!

BURKE (*walking up and down—distractedly*): That's right, make game of me! Oh, I'm a great coward surely, to be coming back to speak with you at all. You've a right to laugh at me.

ANNA: I ain't laughing at you, Mat.

BURKE (*unheeding*): You to be what you are, and me to be Mat Burke, and me to be drove back to look at you again! 'Tis black shame is on me!

ANNA (*resentfully*): Then get out. No one's holding you!

BURKE (*bewilderedly*): And me to listen to that talk from a woman like you and be frightened to close her mouth with a slap! Oh, God help me, I'm a yellow coward for all men to spit at! (*Then furiously*) But I'll not be getting out of this till I've had me word. (*Raising his fist threateningly*) And let you look out how you drive me! (*Letting his fist fall helplessly*) Don't be angry now! I'm raving like a real lunatic, I'm thinking, and the sorrow you put on me has my brains drownded in grief. (*Suddenly bending down to her and grasping her arm intensely*) Tell me it's a lie, I'm saying! That's what I'm after coming to hear you say.

ANNA (*dully*): A lie? What?

BURKE (*with passionate entreaty*): All the badness you told me two days back. Sure it must be a lie! You was only making game of me,

wasn't you? Tell me 'twas a lie, Anna, and I'll be saying prayers of thanks on my two knees to the Almighty God!

ANNA (*terribly shaken—faintly*): I can't, Mat. (*As he turns away—imploringly*) Oh, Mat, won't you see that no matter what I was I ain't that any more? Why, listen! I packed up my bag this afternoon and went ashore. I'd been waiting here all alone for two days, thinking maybe you'd come back—thinking maybe you'd think over all I'd said—and maybe—oh, I don't know what I was hoping! But I was afraid to even go out of the cabin for a second, honest—afraid you might come and not find me here. Then I gave up hope when you didn't show up and I went to the railroad station. I was going to New York. I was going back—

BURKE (*hoarsely*): God's curse on you!

ANNA: Listen, Mat. You hadn't come, and I'd gave up hope. But—in the station—I couldn't go. I'd bought my ticket and everything. (*She takes the ticket from her dress and tries to hold it before his eyes*) But I got to thinking about you—and I couldn't take the train—I couldn't! So I come back here—to wait some more. Oh, Mat, don't you see I've changed? Can't you forgive what's dead and gone—and forget it?

BURKE (*turning on her—overcome by rage again*): Forget, is it? I'll not forget till my dying day, I'm telling you, and me tormented with thoughts. (*In a frenzy*) Oh, I'm wishing I had wan of them fornenst me this minute and I'd beat him with my fists till he'd be a bloody corpse! I'm wishing the whole lot of them will roast in hell till the Judgment Day—and yourself along with them, for you're as bad as they are.

ANNA (*shuddering*): Mat! (*Then after a pause—in a voice of dead, stony calm*) Well, you've had your say. Now you better beat it.

BURKE (*starts slowly for the door—hesitates—then after a pause*): And what'll you be doing?

ANNA: What difference does it make to you?

BURKE: I'm asking you!

ANNA (*in the same tone*): My bag's packed and I got my ticket. I'll go to New York tomorrow.

BURKE (*helplessly*): You mean—you'll be doing the same again?

ANNA (*stonily*): Yes.

BURKE (*in anguish*): You'll not! Don't torment me with that talk! 'Tis a she-divil you are sent to drive me mad entirely!

ANNA (*her voice breaking*): Oh, for Gawd's sake, Mat, leave me alone! Go away! Don't you see I'm licked? Why d'you want to keep on kicking me?

BURKE (*indignantly*): And don't you deserve the worst I'd say, God forgive you?

ANNA: All right. Maybe I do. But don't rub it in. Why ain't you done what you said you was going to? Why ain't you got that ship was going to take you to the other side of the earth where you'd never see me again?

BURKE: I have.

ANNA (*startled*): What—then you're going—honest?

BURKE: I signed on today at noon, drunk as I was—and she's sailing tomorrow.

ANNA: And where's she going to?

BURKE: Cape Town.

ANNA (*the memory of having heard that name a little while before coming to her—with a start, confusedly*): Cape Town? Where's that? Far away?

BURKE: 'Tis at the end of Africa. That's far for you.

ANNA (*forcing a laugh*): You're keeping your word all right, ain't you? (*After a slight pause—curiously*) What's the boat's name?

BURKE: The *Londonderry*.

ANNA (*it suddenly comes to her that this is the same ship her father is sailing on*): The *Londonderry!* It's the same—Oh, this is too much! (*With wild, ironical laughter*) Ha-ha-ha!

BURKE: What's up with you now?

ANNA: Ha-ha-ha! It's funny, funny! I'll die laughing!

BURKE (*irritated*): Laughing at what?

ANNA: It's a secret. You'll know soon enough. It's funny. (*Controlling herself—after a pause—cynically*) What kind of a place is this Cape Town? Plenty of dames there, I suppose?

BURKE: To hell with them! That I may never see another woman to my dying hour!

ANNA: That's what you say now, but I'll bet by the time you get there you'll have forgot all about me and start in talking the same old bull you talked to me to the first one you meet.

BURKE (*offended*): I'll not, then! God mend you, is it making me out to be the like of yourself you are, and you taking up with this one and that all the years of your life?

ANNA (*angrily assertive*): Yes, that's yust what I do mean! You been doing the same thing all your life, picking up a new girl in every port. How're you any better than I was?

BURKE (*thoroughly exasperated*): Is it no shame you have at all? I'm a fool to be wasting talk on you and you hardened in badness. I'll go out of this and lave you alone forever. (*He starts for the door—then stops to turn on her furiously*) And I suppose 'tis the same lies you told them all before that you told to me?

ANNA (*indignantly*): That's a lie! I never did!

BURKE (*miserably*): You'd be saying that, anyway.

ANNA (*forcibly, with growing intensity*): Are you trying to accuse me—of being in love—really in love—with them?

BURKE: I'm thinking you were, surely.

ANNA (*furiously, as if this were the last insult—advancing on him threateningly*): You mutt, you! I've stood enough from you. Don't you dare. (*With scornful bitterness*) Love 'em! Oh, my Gawd! You damn thick-head! Love 'em? (*Savagely*) I hated 'em, I tell you!

Hated 'em, hated 'em, hated 'em! And may Gawd strike me dead this minute and my mother, too, if she was alive, if I ain't telling you the honest truth!

BURKE (*immensely pleased by her vehemence—a light beginning to break over his face—but still uncertain, torn between doubt and the desire to believe—helplessly*): If I could only be believing you now!

ANNA (*distractedly*): Oh, what's the use? What's the use of me talking? What's the use of anything? (*Pleadingly*) Oh, Mat, you mustn't think that for a second! You mustn't! Think all the other bad about me you want to, and I won't kick, 'cause you've a right to. But don't think that! (*On the point of tears*) I couldn't bear it! It'd be yust too much to know you was going away where I'd never see you again —thinking that about me!

BURKE (*after an inward struggle—tensely—forcing out the words with difficulty*): If I was believing—that you'd never had love for any other man in the world but me—I could be forgetting the rest, maybe.

ANNA (*with a cry of joy*): Mat!

BURKE (*slowly*): If 'tis truth you're after telling, I'd have a right, maybe, to believe you'd changed—and that I'd changed you myself till the thing you'd been all your life wouldn't be you any more at all.

ANNA (*hanging on his words—breathlessly*): Oh, Mat! That's what I been trying to tell you all along!

BURKE (*simply*): For I've a power of strength in me to lead men the way I want, and women, too, maybe, and I'm thinking I'd change you to a new woman entirely, so I'd never know, or you either, what kind of woman you'd been in the past at all.

ANNA: Yes, you could, Mat! I know you could!

BURKE: And I'm thinking 'twasn't your fault, maybe, but having that old ape for a father that left you to grow up alone, made you what you was. And if I could be believing 'tis only me you—

ANNA (*distractedly*): You got to believe it, Mat! What can I do? I'll do anything, anything you want to prove I'm not lying!

BURKE (*suddenly seems to have a solution. He feels in the pocket of his coat and grasps something—solemnly*): Would you be willing to swear an oath, now—a terrible, fearful oath would send your soul to the divils in hell if you was lying?

ANNA (*eagerly*): Sure, I'll swear, Mat—on anything!

BURKE (*takes a small, cheap old crucifix from his pocket and holds it up for her to see*): Will you swear on this?

ANNA (*reaching out for it*): Yes. Sure I will. Give it to me.

BURKE (*holding it away*): 'Tis a cross was given me by my mother, God rest her soul. (*He makes the sign of the cross mechanically*) I was a lad only, and she told me to keep it by me if I'd be waking or sleeping and never lose it, and it'd bring me luck. She died soon after. But I'm after keeping it with me from that day to this, and I'm telling you there's great power in it, and 'tis great bad luck it's saved me from and me roaming the seas, and I having it tied round my neck when my last ship sunk, and it bringing me safe to land when the others went to their death. (*Very earnestly*) And I'm warning you now, if you'd swear an oath on this, 'tis my old woman herself will be looking down from Hivin above, and praying Almighty God and the Saints to put a great curse on you if she'd hear you swearing a lie!

ANNA (*awed by his manner—superstitiously*): I wouldn't have the nerve—honest—if it was a lie. But it's the truth and I ain't scared to swear. Give it to me.

BURKE (*handing it to her—almost frightenedly, as if he feared for her safety*): Be careful what you'd swear, I'm saying.

ANNA (*holding the cross gingerly*): Well—what do you want me to swear? You say it.

BURKE: Swear I'm the only man in the world ivir you felt love for.

ANNA (*looking into his eyes steadily*): I swear it.

BURKE: And that you'll be forgetting from this day all the badness you've done and never do the like of it again.

ANNA (*forcibly*): I swear it! I swear it by God!

BURKE: And may the blackest curse of God strike you if you're lying. Say it now!

ANNA: And may the blackest curse of God strike me if I'm lying!

BURKE (*with a stupendous sigh*): Oh, glory be to God, I'm after believing you now! (*He takes the cross from her hand, his face beaming with joy, and puts it back in his pocket. He puts his arm about her waist and is about to kiss her when he stops, appalled by some terrible doubt.*)

ANNA (*alarmed*): What's the matter with you?

BURKE (*with sudden fierce questioning*): Is it Catholic ye are?

ANNA (*confused*): No. Why?

BURKE (*filled with a sort of bewildered foreboding*): Oh, God, help me! (*With a dark glance of suspicion at her*) There's some divil's trickery in it, to be swearing an oath on a Catholic cross and you wan of the others.

ANNA (*distractedly*): Oh, Mat, don't you believe me?

BURKE (*miserably*): If it isn't a Catholic you are—

ANNA: I ain't nothing. What's the difference? Didn't you hear me swear?

BURKE (*passionately*): Oh, I'd a right to stay away from you—but I couldn't! I was loving you in spite of it all and wanting to be with you, God forgive me, no matter what you are. I'd go mad if I'd not have you! I'd be killing the world— (*He seizes her in his arms and kisses her fiercely.*)

ANNA (*with a gasp of joy*): Mat!

BURKE (*suddenly holding her away from him and staring into her eyes as if to probe into her soul—slowly*): If your oath is no proper oath at all, I'll have to be taking your naked word for it and have you anyway, I'm thinking—I'm needing you that bad!

ANNA (*hurt—reproachfully*): Mat! I swore, didn't I?

BURKE (*defiantly, as if challenging fate*): Oath or no oath, 'tis no matter. We'll be wedded in the morning, with the help of God. (*Still more defiantly*) We'll be happy now, the two of us, in spite of the divil! (*He crushes her to him and kisses her again. The door on the left is pushed open and* CHRIS *appears in the doorway. He stands blinking at them. At first the old expression of hatred of* BURKE *comes into his eyes instinctively. Then a look of resignation and relief takes its place. His face lights up with a sudden happy thought. He turns back into the bedroom—reappears immediately with the tin can of beer in his hand—grinning.*)

CHRIS: Ve have a drink on this, py golly! (*They break away from each other with startled exclamations.*)

BURKE (*explosively*): God stiffen it! (*He takes a step toward* CHRIS *threateningly.*)

ANNA (*happily—to her father*): That's the way to talk! (*With a laugh*) And say, it's about time for you and Mat to kiss and make up. You're going to be shipmates on the *Londonderry*, did you know it?

BURKE (*astounded*): Shipmates—He has himself—

CHRIS (*equally astounded*): Ay vas bo'sun on her.

BURKE: The divil! (*Then angrily*) You'd be going back to sea and leaving her alone, would you?

ANNA (*quickly*): It's all right, Mat. That's where he belongs, and I want him to go. You got to go, too; we'll need the money. (*With a laugh, as she gets the glasses*) And as for me being alone, that runs in the family, and I'll get used to it. (*Pouring out their glasses*) I'll get a little house somewhere and I'll make a regular place for you two to come back to—wait and see. And now you drink up and be friends.

BURKE (*happily—but still a bit resentful against the old man*): Sure! (*Clinking his glass against* CHRIS') Here's luck to you! (*He drinks.*)

CHRIS (*subdued—his face melancholy*): Skoal. (*He drinks.*)

BURKE (*to* ANNA, *with a wink*): You'll not be lonesome long. I'll see

to that, with the help of God. 'Tis himself here will be having a grandchild to ride on his foot, I'm telling you!

ANNA (*turning away in embarrassment*): Quit the kidding now. (*She picks up her bag and goes into the room on left. As soon as she is gone* BURKE *relapses into an attitude of gloomy thought.* CHRIS *stares at his beer absent-mindedly. Finally* BURKE *turns on him.*)

BURKE: Is it any religion at all you have, you and your Anna?

CHRIS (*surprised*): Vhy yes. Ve was Lutheran in ole country.

BURKE (*horrified*): Luthers, is it? (*Then with a grim resignation, slowly, aloud to himself*) Well, I'm damned then surely. Yerra, what's the difference? 'Tis the will of God, anyway.

CHRIS (*moodily preoccupied with his own thoughts—speaks with somber premonition as* ANNA *re-enters from the left*): It's funny. It's queer, yes—you and me shipping on same boat dat vay. It ain't right. Ay don't know—it's dat funny vay ole davil sea do her vorst dirty tricks, yes. It's so. (*He gets up and goes back and, opening the door, stares out into the darkness.*)

BURKE (*nodding his head in gloomy acquiescence—with a great sigh*): I'm fearing maybe you have the right of it for once, divil take you.

ANNA (*forcing a laugh*): Gee, Mat, you ain't agreeing with him, are you? (*She comes forward and puts her arm about his shoulder—with a determined gayety*) Aw say, what's the matter? Cut out the gloom. We're all fixed now, ain't we, me and you? (*Pours out more beer into his glass and fills one for herself—slaps him on the back*) Come on! Here's to the sea, no matter what! Be a game sport and drink to that! Come on! (*She gulps down her glass.* BURKE *banishes his superstitious premonitions with a defiant jerk of his head, grins up at her, and drinks to her toast.*)

CHRIS (*looking out into the night—lost in his somber preoccupation shakes his head and mutters*): Fog, fog, fog, all bloody time. You can't see vhere you vas going, no. Only dat ole davil, sea—she knows! (*The two stare at him. From the harbor comes the muffled, mournful wail of steamers' whistles.*)

(*The Curtain Falls.*)

Reading *Anna Christie* may turn out to be a disappointing experience unless the reader brings the play imaginatively to life, seeing it as a theatrical producer might. The central theme at first seems to be one of the most stereotyped in literature — the moral regeneration of the hard, cynical prostitute with a heart of gold. In drama it is not the story that concerns us primarily, but rather the playwright's skill in making the commonplace into a piece of living theater. Many of Shakespeare's tragic heroes, for example, are not original with him, or in the theater: the ruthless, ambitious ruler, the insanely jealous husband, the senile, foolish father are stock characters in both drama and literature. O'Neill's greatness lies, not in the profundity of his thought or the originality of his characters, but in his ability to give them life and meaning.

One of the first and most troublesome problems a dramatist faces is that of exposition. The novelist, by comparison, has no such difficulty; he can either begin his story at a point early enough to permit the reader to build the necessary body of facts, or he can describe or narrate past events at the juncture that best suits his purpose. The dramatist has no leisure of this kind; his situation must develop at once, and his audience must be informed efficiently of all background details while the action is in full swing, or the play will fail to arrest our interest. The dramatic cliches of the French maid who talks to herself while she dusts the furniture, or of the butler who gives necessary exposition at length over the telephone, are just two examples of the pitfalls facing the unskilled dramatist in getting his play underway.

O'Neill does not attempt to jam all details of exposition into the opening moments as though it were an onerous job best done as painlessly and speedily as possible. First he concentrates on establishing the mood of life along the waterfront, making use of characters who have no dramatic relevance to the central plot. Then, casually, through the device of the letter, the conversation turns to old Chris. But with Chris' arrival O'Neill deliberately drops any discussion of the letter, leaving the audience with a sense of anticipation while he begins to develop Chris' character. With Marthy's entrance we, like Larry, almost forget the letter. Now that the playwright has provided Chris with a sympathetic audience in the play, it seems quite natural for them to inquire

curiously about this unknown chapter in Chris' life. But only gradually do we obtain all of the relevant details of the characters' lives as they move toward the dramatic explosion of Act Three. What other moments in Acts One and Two are given over primarily to exposition? Do they seem arbitrarily forced upon the situation or do they grow spontaneously out of the dramatic moment?

Closely related to dramatic exposition is the device of foreshadowing. Just as exposition brings time past into time present, foreshadowing hints of time future in time present. O'Neill succeeds in blending foreshadowing and exposition almost from the beginning, so that the audience can sense immediately the full scope of the action. When Larry, half in jest, taunts Chris with the observation that Anna " 'll be marryin' a sailor herself, likely. It's in the blood" (p. 185), Chris responds with violent anger, and we should feel both the approaching conflict and the resolution that is already being suggested. In Act Two, Anna's destiny is foreshadowed when she remarks that she somehow feels a kind of affinity for the sea, a new sense of belonging. Chris' grim foreboding is confirmed with dramatic suddenness as Mat enters out of the sea and the fog-shrouded night. On what other occasions does O'Neill also resort to foreshadowing? What dramatic effects does he achieve in each instance?

In the hands of an accomplished dramatist like O'Neill the relatively obvious techniques of exposition and foreshadowing can be turned to richer use through the help of dramatic irony. Dramatic irony exists when the audience has more information than the characters on stage possess, and hence can view the drama with a double perspective. It is possible, of course, to have layers upon layers of dramatic irony, with some characters knowing more than others but not so much as the audience, thereby still further enriching our dramatic response. Anna's arrival at "Johnny-the-Priest's" is a case in point. Marthy, like the audience, sizes up Anna at once for what she is (although we later come to recognize that our first impression is not altogether accurate); moreover, we immediately guess her identity and hence have the excitement of observing Marthy's ironical laughter as she too comes to a realization of the truth. In contrast, Chris is completely blinded by his love, seeing only the idealized daughter he wants to find. The coloring of this moment by dramatic irony is one of the ways in which the playwright prevents the scene from becoming maudlin and sentimental. In Acts Two and Three Burke calls Anna "a

fine dacent girl," thinking of her as Chris does. The dramatic irony on the surface is obvious, but does it in any way cut close to the heart of O'Neill's meaning in *Anna Christie*?

All of the characters in *Anna Christie* are inexorably bound up in the workings of an inscrutable, sinister Fate which leads them in blindness and anguish toward a destiny they cannot control. Chris can try to escape into the temporary and illusory security of the coal barge. He can attempt to save Anna from "dat ole davil sea" by sending her far inland. But every effort to break out of the web only binds its victims more inextricably than before. Unlike other naturalistic modern dramatists, O'Neill does not place responsibility for man's downfall primarily upon his heredity and environment. What is the playwright's purpose, then, in sketching the whole past history of the Christopherson family? How has the past molded Chris' attitude toward life?

At every point in their lives the characters are affected directly or indirectly by the "old devil sea," which in the play is more than just an integral part of the setting — it is O'Neill's chief metaphor for man's life and destiny. Anna's and Chris' past are irrevocably bound up in it. Anna is drawn toward the sea, feeling toward it a sense of belonging. Out of the sea comes Burke to struggle with Chris for the possession of Anna's love. And back upon it go Chris and Burke in the end, leaving Anna alone like her mother and her mother's mother before her. What are the attitudes of Chris and Mat toward the sea? How are they brought into dramatic conflict? To what extent is Anna's view of the sea responsible for her falling in love with Mat?

As a play about man's struggle with an evil destiny, *Anna Christie* inevitably raises the issue of man's moral responsibility for his own conduct. Throughout the play each of the characters grapples with the problem, if only by rationalizing defensively. How does Chris attempt to explain his treatment of his wife and his daughter? Although Anna scornfully rejects the explanation as an evasive alibi, isn't our attitude toward it somewhat more complex? O'Neill, at any rate, has not placed Anna on very solid ground for condemning her father's evasion of paternal responsibility when we consider her own defense of her immorality (pp. 193-194, 233-234). One critic of the play succinctly puts it this way: "Given the initial impetus, fictitious females are known to have traveled the rest of the road to shame under their own power. But voluntarily to substitute prostitution for tending children on the ground that in the latter position one is 'caged in' and 'lonesome' is both novel and

improbable."[1] Engel places the confusion in moral logic with O'Neill; could it be argued that Anna herself ought to have had some second thoughts about the motivation for her tragic choice? Doesn't her bitter condemnation "It was all men's fault – the whole business" (p. 194) sound strongly like another line echoing throughout the play? Who is to blame for the tragic mess that O'Neill's characters have made of their lives? Is Anna's evaluation of the moral issues borne out by the dramatic action: "There ain't nothing to forgive, anyway. It ain't your fault, and it ain't mine, and it ain't his neither. We're all poor nuts, and things happen, and we yust get mixed in wrong, that's all" (p. 239)?

Closely related to O'Neill's central metaphor of the sea is, of course, the fog that closes in over much of the play. Chris' tag line – "Fog, fog, fog, all bloody time. You can't see vhere you vas going, no. Only dat ole davil, sea – she knows!" – suggests not only the opacity of the future as seen by human eyes but, as Lionel Trilling says, "man's fogbound intellect" trying in vain to outsmart the implacable forces arrayed against him. Why should it follow that Anna and Chris have quite contradictory attitudes toward the fog swirling around them? Why does Act Three take place on a bright, sunny afternoon and Acts Two and Four on dark, foggy nights? How can an audience tell when atmospheric effects are symbolic? The final act opens and closes with the muffled wail of steamer whistles in the fog. To what extent is this sound effect also both atmospheric and symbolic?

As with Inge's *Come Back, Little Sheba,* some critics have expressed dissatisfaction with the ending, arguing that it gave *Anna Christie* the fairyland tone of "And so they lived happily ever after." Upon what elements in Act Four would a case have to be made for what O'Neill calls the misleading, false definiteness of the ending? Commenting on his own purpose in shaping the conclusion, O'Neill once wrote: "The happy ending is merely the comma at the end of a gaudy introductory clause, with the body of the sentence still unwritten . . . . I relied on the father's last speech of superstitious uncertainty to let my theme flow through – and on . . . . All of them at the end have a vague foreboding that although they have had their moment, the decision rests with the sea which has achieved the conquest of Anna." For O'Neill, nothing fundamental has really been decided at all. His

[1] Edwin A. Engel, *The Haunted Heroes of Eugene O'Neill* (Cambridge, Mass., 1953), p. 41.

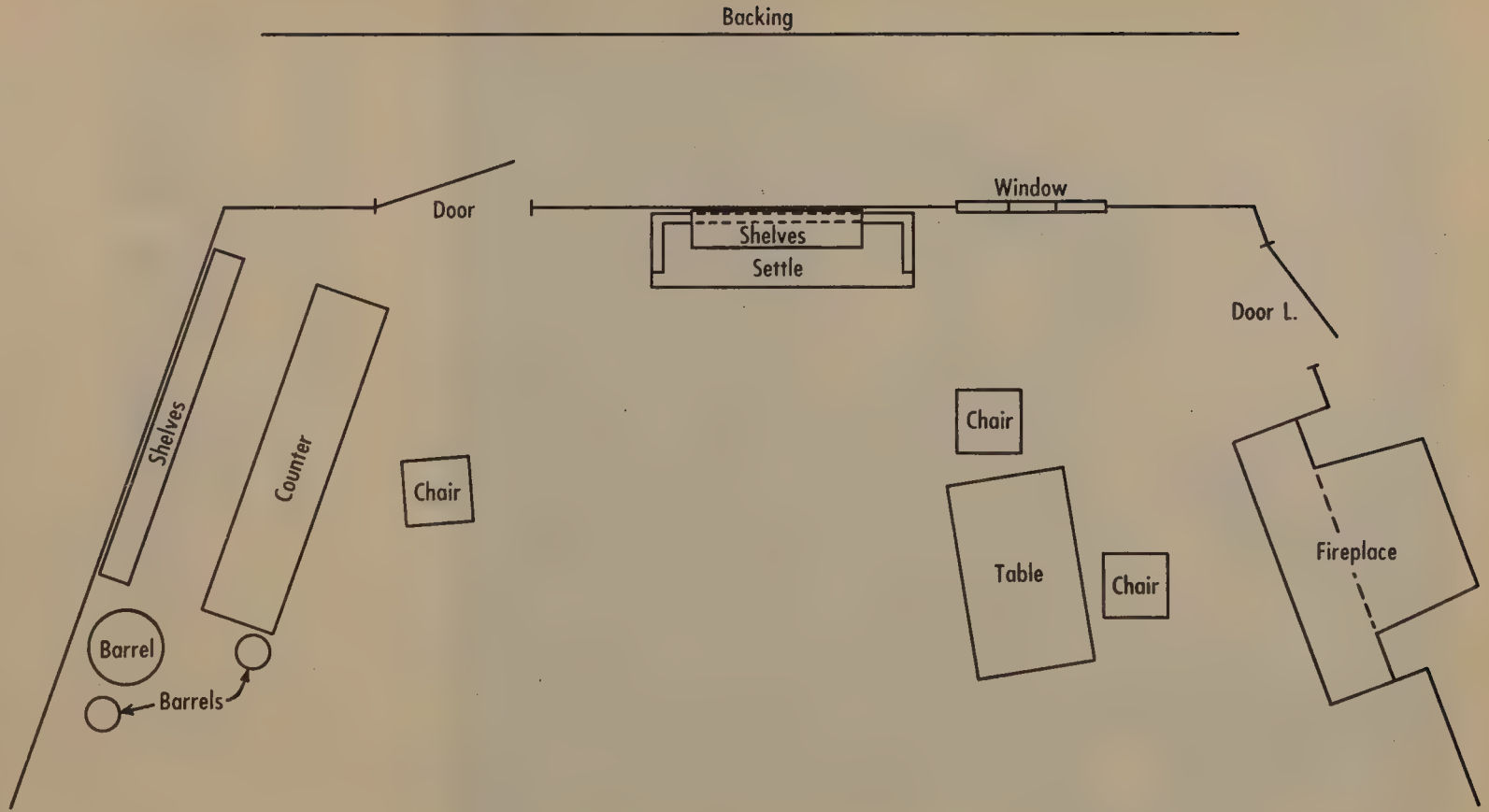
characters may have solved their immediate difficulties, but in so doing they have inevitably and ironically thrown themselves again upon the sea, with which "the decision rests."

QUESTIONS

1. O'Neill once said that he had originally thought of calling his drama *Comma*. What would have been the significance of that title? Why, perhaps, did O'Neill abandon the idea?
2. An earlier version of *Anna Christie*, produced but never published, was entitled *Chris Christopherson*. In revising his work, O'Neill apparently shifted his attention to his heroine. Some critics, however, have professed to see remnants of the old play showing through, arguing that this is still a play about Chris. Can a case be made for this theory?
3. O'Neill, like most dramatists, is quite careful to prepare a theatrically exciting first entrance for his leading lady. How does he bring it off?
4. How can one account for Chris' remarks about the sea on page 199, which seem to contradict completely his attitude elsewhere?
5. What dramatic values does O'Neill gain by ending Act One with Chris and Anna's celebration? Act Four also ends with a toast. What is the difference in the two scenes? How does the repetition of this action underscore the main theme of the play?
6. Why would Mat's first scene be highly effective in the theater?
7. What makes the climax at the end of Act Three the theatrical high point of the play? Consider, for example, effects produced by changes in tone of voice, physical movement on stage, and dramatic irony.
8. It has been argued that a fundamental weakness in *Anna Christie* is that the secondary love plot takes over melodramatically in Act Three and causes the audience to lose sight of the main theme of man's struggle with an implacable fate. Justify or refute the validity of this point of view.
9. What does Chris mean on page 240 when he says: "Dat ole davil, sea, she make me Yonah man ain't no good for nobody"?
10. What effects are achieved by Chris' chorus-like invectives against the sea at the end of Acts Two, Three, and Four?
11. O'Neill is often criticized for his failure of verbal power, particularly in moments of dramatic tension. Comment on O'Neill's capabilities as a writer of dialogue and, in particular, of dialect.
12. To what extent would you consider *Anna Christie* a tragedy? Wherein does it fall short of tragedy?

JOHN M. SYNGE

THE PLAYBOY OF THE WESTERN WORLD



THE PLAYBOY OF THE WESTERN WORLD

JOHN M. SYNGE

JOHN MILLINGTON SYNGE, a leading playwright of the Irish Renaissance, was born near Dublin in 1871 and died there, of cancer, on March 24, 1909. Of his short life only four or five years were artistically productive. After graduating from Trinity College, Dublin, in 1892, he spent some time traveling through France, Germany, and Italy. In 1897, upon the urging of William Butler Yeats, he went to live among the Irish fishing people of the Aran Islands in Galway Bay, where he learned the language and ways of the peasants and discovered his own literary potentialities.

Synge's entry into the theatrical world of Dublin was by no means a triumphant one. Even his *Riders to the Sea,* one of the finest one-act tragedies in the language, failed to attract audiences at first. *The Shadow of the Glen,* his first play to be performed, actually met with open hostility; a satire on the Irish peasantry, it infuriated the zealously patriotic nationalists. This enmity toward Synge's work culminated a few years later in a demonstration against *The Playboy of the Western World* that was led by Sinn Fein, the extreme nationalists. The leaders of the Irish National Theater stood by Synge, however, and he, along with Yeats and Lady Gregory, played a part of great importance in establishing the reputation of the Abbey Theater.

Synge's Preface to *The Playboy of the Western World* follows:

> . . . I have used one or two words only that I have not heard among the country people of Ireland, or spoken in my own nursery . . . . A certain number of the phrases I employ I have heard also from herds and fishermen . . . or from beggar-women and ballad-singers nearer Dublin; and I am glad to acknowledge how much I owe to the folk imagination of these fine people . . . . All art is a collaboration; and there is little doubt that in the happy ages of literature, striking and beautiful phrases were as ready to the story-teller's or the playwright's hand, as the rich cloaks and dresses of his time. It is probable that when the Elizabethan dramatist took his ink-horn and sat down to his work he used many phrases that he had just heard, as he sat at dinner, from his mother or his children. In Ireland, those of us who know the people have the same privilege. When I was writing "The Shadow of the

Glen," . . . I got more aid than any learning could have given me from a chink in the floor of the old Wicklow house where I was staying, that let me hear what was being said by the servant girls in the kitchen. . . . In countries where the imagination of the people, and the language they use, is rich and living, it is possible for a writer to be rich and copious in his words, and at the same time to give the reality, which is the root of all poetry, in a comprehensive and natural form. In the modern literature of towns, however, richness is found only in sonnets, or prose poems, or in one or two elaborate books that are far away from the profound and common interests of life. One has, on one side, Mallarmé and Huysmans producing this literature; and on the other, Ibsen and Zola dealing with the reality of life in joyless and pallid words. On the stage one must have reality, and one must have joy; and that is why the intellectual modern drama has failed, and people have grown sick of the false joy of the musical comedy, that has been given them in place of the rich joy found only in what is superb and wild in reality. In a good play every speech should be as fully flavoured as a nut or apple, and such speeches cannot be written by anyone who works among people who have shut their lips on poetry . . . .

PRINCIPAL WORKS

Plays

The Shadow of the Glen (1903)
Riders to the Sea (1904)
The Well of the Saints (1905)
The Playboy of the Western World (1907)
The Tinker's Wedding (1909)
Deirdre of the Sorrows (1910)

Essays

The Aran Islands
In Wicklow
In West Kerry
In the Congested Districts
Under Ether

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GLOSSARY

banbhs farmlands left fallow
banns public announcement in church of a proposed marriage
blackthorn a walking cane
boreen a narrow lane or path
cess stop
cleeve a basket
cnuceen a small hill
cockles burrs growing in grain fields
cockshot man the man who runs the shooting gallery at a fair
conceit idea
creel cart a cart with a wickerwork basket
curragh a small boat made by covering a wicker frame with hide or tarpaulin; a coracle
da dad
droughty thirsty
frish-frash slops. Pegeen apparently invents the word for its sound.
gaffer fellow
gallous strange, wonderful
gob beak
hop'orth a half-penny's worth
jobbing cheating
liefer preferably
loy a long, narrow spade
lug ear
mitch off sneak away
moiling drudging
pandied struck
parlatic paralyzed. The word is more than Mahon can handle.
peeler a policeman (the colloquial equivalent of "cop"), so called after Sir Robert Peel, who organized the Irish constabulary
pike spike
porter a weak, rather sweet stout, originally a mixture of ale and stout
pot-boy a boy who carries pots of ale in a pub
poteen a strong Irish whiskey, illicitly made
scribes ditches
scruff the nape of the neck
shaving cheating
shebeen a tavern where taxable liquors are sold without the license required by law
skelping whipping
slate thrash
spavindy crippled
streeleen a stream
streeler a wanderer
supeen a small drink, a "shot." A supeen is literally a shallow wooden vessel resembling a soup plate.
swiggling swinging
thraneen a very small coin
trick-o'-the-loop man the operator of a concession at a carnival
turbary peat turf, used for fuel
wattle a walking stick
whisht be quiet
winkered wearing blinders

CHARACTERS

CHRISTOPHER MAHON
OLD MAHON (*his father, a squatter*)
MICHAEL JAMES FLAHERTY, called MICHAEL JAMES (*a publican*)
MARGARET FLAHERTY, called PEGEEN MIKE (*his daughter*)
WIDOW QUIN (*a woman of about thirty*)
SHAWN KEOGH (*her cousin, a young farmer*)
PHILLY CULLEN and JIMMY FARRELL (*small farmers*)
SARA TANSEY, SUSAN BRADY, and HONOR BLAKE (*village girls*)
A BELLMAN
SOME PEASANTS

The action takes place near a village, on a wild coast of Mayo. The first Act passes on an evening of autumn, the other two Acts on the following day.

The Playboy of the Western World was first produced by the National Theater Society at the Abbey Theater, Dublin, on January 26, 1907.

Act One

SCENE: *Country public-house or shebeen, very rough and untidy. There is a sort of counter on the right with shelves, holding many bottles and jugs, just seen above it. Empty barrels stand near the counter. At back, a little to left of counter, there is a door into the open air, then, more to the left, there is a settle with shelves above it, with more jugs, and a table beneath a window. At the left there is a large open fire-place, with turf fire, and a small door into inner room. Pegeen, a wild-looking but fine girl of about twenty, is writing at table. She is dressed in the usual peasant dress.*

PEGEEN (*slowly as she writes*): Six yards of stuff for to make a yellow gown. A pair of lace boots with lengthy heels on them and brassy eyes. A hat is suited for a wedding-day. A fine tooth comb. To be sent with three barrels of porter in Jimmy Farrell's creel cart on the evening of the coming Fair to Mister Michael James Flaherty. With the best compliments of this season. Margaret Flaherty.

SHAWN KEOGH (*a fat and fair young man comes in as she signs, looks around awkwardly, when he sees she is alone*): Where's himself?

PEGEEN (*without looking at him*): He's coming. (*She directs the letter*) To Master Sheamus Mulroy, Wine and Spirit Dealer, Castlebar.

SHAWN (*uneasily*): I didn't see him on the road.

PEGEEN: How would you see him (*licks stamp and puts it on letter*) and it dark night this half hour gone by?

SHAWN (*turning towards the door again*): I stood a while outside wondering would I have a right to pass on or to walk in and see you, Pegeen Mike (*comes to fire*), and I could hear the cows breathing, and sighing in the stillness of the air, and not a step moving any place from this gate to the bridge.

PEGEEN (*putting letter in envelope*): It's above at the cross-roads he is, meeting Philly Cullen; and a couple more are going along with him to Kate Cassidy's wake.

SHAWN (*looking at her blankly*): And he's going that length in the dark night?

PEGEEN (*impatiently*): He is surely, and leaving me lonesome on the scruff of the hill. (*She gets up and puts envelope on dresser, then winds clock*) Isn't it long the nights are now, Shawn Keogh, to be leaving a poor girl with her own self counting the hours to the dawn of day?

SHAWN (*with an awkward humour*): If it is, when we're wedded in a short while you'll have no call to complain, for I've little will to be walking off to wakes or weddings in the darkness of the night.

PEGEEN (*with rather scornful good humour*): You're making mighty certain, Shaneen, that I'll wed you now.

SHAWN: Aren't we after making a good bargain, the way we're only waiting these days on Father Reilly's dispensation from the bishops, or the Court of Rome?

PEGEEN (*looking at him teasingly, washing up at dresser*): It's a wonder, Shaneen, the Holy Father'd be taking notice of the likes of you; for if I was him I wouldn't bother with this place where you'll meet none but Red Linahan, has a squint in his eye, and Patcheen is lame in his heel, or the mad Mulrannies were driven from California and they lost in their wits. We're a queer lot these times to go troubling the Holy Father on his sacred seat.

SHAWN (*scandalized*): If we are, we're as good this place as another, maybe, and as good these times as we were for ever.

PEGEEN (*with scorn*): As good, is it? Where now will you meet the like of Daneen Sullivan knocked the eye from a peeler, or Marcus Quin, God rest him, got six months for maiming ewes, and he a great warrant to tell stories of holy Ireland till he'd have the old women shedding down tears about their feet. Where will you find the like of them, I'm saying?

SHAWN (*timidly*): If you don't, it's a good job, maybe; for (*with peculiar emphasis on the words*) Father Reilly has small conceit to have that kind walking around and talking to the girls.

PEGEEN (*impatiently, throwing water from basin out of the door*): Stop tormenting me with Father Reilly (*imitating his voice*) when I'm asking only what way I'll pass these twelve hours of dark, and not take my death with the fear. (*Looking out of door.*)

SHAWN (*timidly*): Would I fetch you the Widow Quin, maybe?

PEGEEN: Is it the like of that murderer? You'll not, surely.

SHAWN (*going to her, soothingly*): Then I'm thinking himself will stop along with you when he sees you taking on, for it'll be a long night-time with great darkness, and I'm after feeling a kind of fellow above in the furzy ditch, groaning wicked like a maddening dog, the way it's good cause you have, maybe, to be fearing now.

PEGEEN (*turning on him sharply*): What's that? Is it a man you seen?

SHAWN (*retreating*): I couldn't see him at all; but I heard him groaning out, and breaking his heart. It should have been a young man from his words speaking.

PEGEEN (*going after him*): And you never went near to see was he hurted or what ailed him at all?

SHAWN: I did not, Pegeen Mike. It was a dark, lonesome place to be hearing the like of him.

PEGEEN: Well, you're a daring fellow, and if they find his corpse stretched above in the dews of dawn, what'll you say then to the peelers, or the Justice of the Peace?

SHAWN (*thunderstruck*): I wasn't thinking of that. For the love of God, Pegeen Mike, don't let on I was speaking of him. Don't tell your father and the men is coming above; for if they heard that story, they'd have great blabbing this night at the wake.

PEGEEN: I'll maybe tell them, and I'll maybe not.

SHAWN: They are coming at the door. Will you whisht, I'm saying?

PEGEEN: Whisht yourself. (*She goes behind counter.* MICHAEL JAMES, *fat jovial publican, comes in followed by* PHILLY CULLEN, *who is thin and mistrusting, and* JIMMY FARRELL, *who is fat and amorous, about forty-five.*)

MEN (*together*): God bless you. The blessing of God on this place.

PEGEEN: God bless you kindly.

MICHAEL (*to men who go to the counter*): Sit down now, and take your rest. (*Crosses to* SHAWN *at the fire*) And how is it you are, Shawn Keogh? Are you coming over the sands to Kate Cassidy's wake?

SHAWN: I am not, Michael James. I'm going home the short cut to my bed.

PEGEEN (*speaking across the counter*): He's right too, and have you no shame, Michael James, to be quitting off for the whole night, and leaving myself lonesome in the shop?

MICHAEL (*good-humouredly*): Isn't it the same whether I go for the whole night or a part only? and I'm thinking it's a queer daughter you are if you'd have me crossing backward through the Stooks of the Dead Women, with a drop taken.

PEGEEN: If I am a queer daughter, it's a queer father'd be leaving me lonesome these twelve hours of dark, and I piling the turf with the dogs barking, and the calves mooing, and my own teeth rattling with the fear.

JIMMY (*flatteringly*): What is there to hurt you, and you a fine, hardy girl would knock the head of any two men in the place?

PEGEEN (*working herself up*): Isn't there the harvest boys with their tongues red for drink, and the ten tinkers is camped in the east glen, and the thousand militia—bad cess to them!—walking idle through the land. There's lots surely to hurt me, and I won't stop alone in it, let himself do what he will.

MICHAEL: If you're that afeard, let Shawn Keogh stop along with you. It's the will of God, I'm thinking, himself should be seeing to you now.

(*They all turn on* SHAWN.)

SHAWN (*in horrified confusion*): I would and welcome, Michael James, but I'm afeard of Father Reilly; and what at all would the Holy Father and the Cardinals of Rome be saying if they heard I did the like of that?

MICHAEL (*with contempt*): God help you! Can't you sit in by the hearth with the light lit and herself beyond in the room? You'll do that surely, for I've heard tell there's a queer fellow above, going mad or getting his death, maybe, in the gripe of the ditch, so she'd be safer this night with a person here.

SHAWN (*with plaintive despair*): I'm afeard of Father Reilly, I'm saying. Let you not be tempting me, and we near married itself.

PHILLY (*with cold contempt*): Lock him in the west room. He'll stay then and have no sin to be telling to the priest.

MICHAEL (*to* SHAWN, *getting between him and the door*): Go up now.

SHAWN (*at the top of his voice*): Don't stop me, Michael James. Let me out of the door, I'm saying, for the love of the Almighty God. Let me out. (*Trying to dodge past him*) Let me out of it, and may God grant you His indulgence in the hour of need.

MICHAEL (*loudly*): Stop your noising, and sit down by the hearth. (*Gives him a push and goes to counter laughing.*)

SHAWN (*turning back, wringing his hands*): Oh, Father Reilly and the saints of God, where will I hide myself today? Oh, St. Joseph and St. Patrick and St. Brigid, and St. James, have mercy on me now! (SHAWN *turns round, sees door clear, and makes a rush for it.*)

MICHAEL (*catching him by the coat-tail*): You'd be going, is it?

SHAWN (*screaming*): Leave me go, Michael James, leave me go, you old Pagan, leave me go, or I'll get the curse of the priests on you, and of the scarlet-coated bishops of the courts of Rome. (*With a sudden movement he pulls himself out of his coat, and disappears out of the door, leaving his coat in* MICHAEL'S *hands.*)

MICHAEL (*turning round, and holding up coat*): Well, there's the coat of a Christian man. Oh, there's sainted glory this day in the lonesome west; and by the will of God I've got you a decent man, Pegeen, you'll have no call to be spying after if you've a score of young girls, maybe, weeding in your fields.

PEGEEN (*taking up the defense of her property*): What right have you to be making game of a poor fellow for minding the priest, when it's your own the fault is, not paying a penny pot-boy to stand along with me and give me courage in the doing of my work? (*She snaps the coat away from him, and goes behind counter with it.*)

MICHAEL (*taken aback*): Where would I get a pot-boy? Would you have me send the bellman screaming in the streets of Castlebar?

SHAWN (*opening the door a chink and putting in his head, in a small voice*): Michael James!

MICHAEL (*imitating him*): What ails you?

SHAWN: The queer dying fellow's beyond looking over the ditch. He's come up, I'm thinking, stealing your hens. (*Looks over his shoulder*) God help me, he's following me now (*he runs into room*), and if he's heard what I said, he'll be having my life, and I going home lonesome in the darkness of the night.

(*For a perceptible moment they watch the door with curiosity. Some one coughs outside. Then* CHRISTY MAHON, *a slight young man, comes in very tired and frightened and dirty.*)

CHRISTY (*in a small voice*): God save all here!

MEN: God save you kindly.

CHRISTY (*going to the counter*): I'd trouble you for a glass of porter, woman of the house. (*He puts down coin.*)

PEGEEN (*serving him*): You're one of the tinkers, young fellow, is beyond camped in the glen?

CHRISTY: I am not; but I'm destroyed walking.

MICHAEL (*patronizingly*): Let you come up then to the fire. You're looking famished with the cold.

CHRISTY: God reward you. (*He takes up his glass and goes a little way across to the left, then stops and looks about him*) Is it often the police do be coming into this place, master of the house?

MICHAEL: If you'd come in better hours, you'd have seen "Licensed for the sale of Beer and Spirits, to be consumed on the premises," written in white letters above the door, and what would the polis want spying on me, and not a decent house within four miles, the way every living Christian is a bona fide, saving one widow alone?

CHRISTY (*with relief*): It's a safe house, so. (*He goes over to the fire, sighing and moaning. Then he sits down, putting his glass beside him and begins gnawing a turnip, too miserable to feel the others staring at him with curiosity.*)

MICHAEL (*going after him*): Is it yourself is fearing the polis? You're wanting, maybe?

CHRISTY: There's many wanting.

MICHAEL: Many surely, with the broken harvest and the ended wars. (*He picks up some stockings, etc., that are near the fire, and carries them away furtively*) It should be larceny, I'm thinking.

CHRISTY (*dolefully*): I had it in my mind it was a different word and a bigger.

PEGEEN: There's a queer lad. Were you never slapped in school, young fellow, that you don't know the name of your deed?

CHRISTY (*bashfully*): I'm slow at learning, a middling scholar only.

MICHAEL: If you're a dunce itself, you'd have a right to know that larceny's robbing and stealing. Is it for the like of that you're wanting?

CHRISTY (*with a flash of family pride*): And I the son of a strong farmer (*with a sudden qualm*), God rest his soul, could have bought up the whole of your old house awhile since, from the butt of his tailpocket, and not have missed the weight of it gone.

MICHAEL (*impressed*): If it's not stealing, it's maybe something big.

CHRISTY (*flattered*): Aye; it's maybe something big.

JIMMY: He's a wicked-looking young fellow. Maybe he followed after a young woman on a lonesome night.

CHRISTY (*shocked*): Oh, the saints forbid, mister; I was all times a decent lad.

PHILLY (*turning on* JIMMY): You're a silly man, Jimmy Farrell. He said his father was a farmer a while since, and there's himself now in a poor state. Maybe the land was grabbed from him, and he did what any decent man would do.

MICHAEL (*to* CHRISTY, *mysteriously*): Was it bailiffs?

CHRISTY: The divil a one.

MICHAEL: Agents?

CHRISTY: The divil a one.

MICHAEL: Landlords?

CHRISTY (*peevishly*): Ah, not at all, I'm saying. You'd see the like of them stories on any little paper of a Munster town. But I'm not calling to mind any person, gentle, simple, judge or jury, did the like of me.

(*They all draw nearer with delighted curiosity.*)

PHILLY: Well, that lad's a puzzle-the-world.

JIMMY: He'd beat Dan Davies' circus, or the holy missioners making sermons on the villainy of man. Try him again, Philly.

PHILLY: Did you strike golden guineas out of solder, young fellow, or shilling coins itself?

CHRISTY: I did not, mister, not sixpence nor a farthing coin.

JIMMY: Did you marry three wives maybe? I'm told there's a sprinkling have done that among the holy Luthers of the preaching north.

CHRISTY (*shyly*): I never married with one, let alone with a couple or three.

PHILLY: Maybe he went fighting for the Boers, the like of the man beyond, was judged to be hanged, quartered and drawn. Were you off east, young fellow, fighting bloody wars for Kruger and the freedom of the Boers?

CHRISTY: I never left my own parish till Tuesday was a week.

PEGEEN (*coming from counter*): He's done nothing, so. (*To* CHRISTY) If you didn't commit murder or a bad, nasty thing, or false coining, or robbery, or butchery, or the like of them, there isn't anything that would be worth your troubling for to run from now. You did nothing at all.

CHRISTY (*his feelings hurt*): That's an unkindly thing to be saying to a poor orphaned traveller, has a prison behind him, and hanging before, and hell's gap gaping below.

PEGEEN (*with a sign to the men to be quiet*): You're only saying it. You did nothing at all. A soft lad the like of you wouldn't slit the windpipe of a screeching sow.

CHRISTY (*offended*): You're not speaking the truth.

PEGEEN (*in mock rage*): Not speaking the truth, is it? Would you have me knock the head off you with the butt of the broom?

CHRISTY (*twisting round on her with a sharp cry of horror*): Don't strike me. I killed my poor father, Tuesday was a week, for doing the like of that.

PEGEEN (*with blank amazement*): Is it killed your father?

CHRISTY (*subsiding*): With the help of God I did surely, and that the Holy Immaculate Mother may intercede for his soul.

PHILLY (*retreating with* JIMMY): There's a daring fellow.

JIMMY: Oh, glory be to God!

MICHAEL (*with great respect*): That was a hanging crime, mister honey. You should have had good reason for doing the like of that.

CHRISTY (*in a very reasonable tone*): He was a dirty man, God forgive him, and he getting old and crusty, the way I couldn't put up with him at all.

PEGEEN: And you shot him dead?

CHRISTY (*shaking his head*): I never used weapons. I've no license, and I'm a law-fearing man.

MICHAEL: It was with a hilted knife maybe? I'm told, in the big world it's bloody knives they use.

CHRISTY (*loudly, scandalized*): Do you take me for a slaughter-boy?

PEGEEN: You never hanged him, the way Jimmy Farrell hanged his dog from the license, and had it screeching and wriggling three hours at the butt of a string, and himself swearing it was a dead dog, and the peelers swearing it had life?

CHRISTY: I did not then. I just riz the loy and let fall the edge of it on the ridge of his skull, and he went down at my feet like an empty sack, and never let a grunt or groan from him at all.

MICHAEL (*making a sign to* PEGEEN *to fill* CHRISTY'S *glass*): And what way weren't you hanged, mister? Did you bury him then?

CHRISTY (*considering*): Aye. I buried him then. Wasn't I digging spuds in the field?

MICHAEL: And the peelers never followed after you the eleven days that you're out?

CHRISTY (*shaking his head*): Never a one of them, and I walking forward facing hog, dog, or divil on the highway of the road.

PHILLY (*nodding wisely*): It's only with a common week-day kind of a murderer them lads would be trusting their carcase, and that man should be a great terror when his temper's roused.

MICHAEL: He should then. (*To* CHRISTY) And where was it, mister honey, that you did the deed?

CHRISTY (*looking at him with suspicion*): Oh, a distant place, master of the house, a windy corner of high, distant hills.

PHILLY (*nodding with approval*): He's a close man, and he's right, surely.

PEGEEN: That'd be a lad with the sense of Solomon to have for a pot-boy, Michael James, if it's the truth you're seeking one at all.

PHILLY: The peelers is fearing him, and if you'd that lad in the house there isn't one of them would come smelling around if the dogs itself were lapping poteen from the dung-pit of the yard.

JIMMY: Bravery's a treasure in a lonesome place, and a lad would kill his father, I'm thinking, would face a foxy divil with a pitchpike on the flags of hell.

PEGEEN: It's the truth they're saying, and if I'd that lad in the house, I wouldn't be fearing the loosed kharki cut-throats, or the walking dead.

CHRISTY (*swelling with surprise and triumph*): Well, glory be to God!

MICHAEL (*with deference*): Would you think well to stop here and be pot-boy, mister honey, if we gave you good wages, and didn't destroy you with the weight of work?

SHAWN (*coming forward uneasily*): That'd be a queer kind to bring into a decent quiet household with the like of Pegeen Mike.

PEGEEN (*very sharply*): Will you whisht? Who's speaking to you?

SHAWN (*retreating*): A bloody-handed murderer the like of . . .

PEGEEN (*snapping at him*): Whisht I am saying; we'll take no fooling from your like at all. (*To* CHRISTY *with a honeyed voice*) And you, young fellow, you'd have a right to stop, I'm thinking, for we'd do our all and utmost to content your needs.

CHRISTY (*overcome with wonder*): And I'd be safe in this place from the searching law?

MICHAEL: You would, surely. If they're not fearing you, itself, the peelers in this place is decent droughty poor fellows, wouldn't touch a cur dog and not give warning in the dead of night.

PEGEEN (*very kindly and persuasively*): Let you stop a short while anyhow. Aren't you destroyed walking with your feet in bleeding blisters, and your whole skin needing washing like a Wicklow sheep?

CHRISTY (*looking round with satisfaction*): It's a nice room, and if it's not humbugging me you are, I'm thinking that I'll surely stay.

JIMMY (*jumps up*): Now, by the grace of God, herself will be safe this night, with a man killed his father holding danger from the door, and let you come on, Michael James, or they'll have the best stuff drunk at the wake.

MICHAEL (*going to the door with men*): And begging your pardon, mister, what name will we call you, for we'd like to know?

CHRISTY: Christopher Mahon.

MICHAEL: Well, God bless you, Christy, and a good rest till we meet again when the sun'll be rising to the noon of day.

CHRISTY: God bless you all.

MEN: God bless you.

(*They go out except* SHAWN, *who lingers at door.*)

SHAWN (*to* PEGEEN): Are you wanting me to stop along with you and keep you from harm?

PEGEEN (*gruffly*): Didn't you say you were fearing Father Reilly?

SHAWN: There'd be no harm staying now, I'm thinking, and himself in it too.

PEGEEN: You wouldn't stay when there was need for you, and let you step off nimble this time when there's none.

SHAWN: Didn't I say it was Father Reilly . . .

PEGEEN: Go on, then, to Father Reilly (*in a jeering tone*), and let him put you in the holy brotherhoods, and leave that lad to me.

SHAWN: If I meet the Widow Quin . . .

PEGEEN: Go on, I'm saying, and don't be waking this place with your noise. (*She hustles him out and bolts the door*) That lad would wear the spirits from the saints of peace. (*Bustles about, then takes off her apron and pins it up in the window as a blind.* CHRISTY *watching her timidly. Then she comes to him and speaks with bland good-humour*) Let you stretch out now by the fire, young fellow. You should be destroyed travelling.

CHRISTY (*shyly again, drawing off his boots*): I'm tired, surely, walking wild eleven days, and waking fearful in the night. (*He holds up one of his feet, feeling his blisters, and looking at them with compassion.*)

PEGEEN (*standing beside him, watching him with delight*): You should have had great people in your family, I'm thinking, with the little, small feet you have, and you with a kind of a quality name, the like of what you'd find on the great powers and potentates of France and Spain.

CHRISTY (*with pride*): We were great surely, with wide and windy acres of rich Munster land.

PEGEEN: Wasn't I telling you, and you a fine, handsome young fellow with a noble brow?

CHRISTY (*with a flash of delighted surprise*): Is it me?

PEGEEN: Aye. Did you never hear that from the young girls where you come from in the west or south?

CHRISTY (*with venom*): I did not then. Oh, they're bloody liars in the naked parish where I grew a man.

PEGEEN: If they are itself, you've heard it these days, I'm thinking, and you walking the world telling out your story to young girls or old.

CHRISTY: I've told my story no place till this night, Pegeen Mike, and it's foolish I was here, maybe, to be talking free, but you're decent people, I'm thinking, and yourself a kindly woman, the way I wasn't fearing you at all.

PEGEEN (*filling a sack with straw*): You've said the like of that, maybe, in every cot and cabin where you've met a young girl on your way.

CHRISTY (*going over to her, gradually raising his voice*): I've said it nowhere till this night, I'm telling you, for I've seen none the like of you the eleven long days I am walking the world, looking over a low ditch or a high ditch on my north or my south, into stony scattered fields, or scribes of bog, where you'd see young, limber girls, and fine prancing women making laughter with the men.

PEGEEN: If you weren't destroyed travelling, you'd have as much talk and streeleen, I'm thinking, as Owen Roe O'Sullivan or the poets of the Dingle Bay, and I've heard all times it's the poets are your like, fine fiery fellows with great rages when their temper's roused.

CHRISTY (*drawing a little nearer to her*): You've a power of rings, God bless you, and would there be any offense if I was asking are you single now?

PEGEEN: What would I want wedding so young?

CHRISTY (*with relief*): We're alike, so.

PEGEEN (*she puts sack on settle and beats it up*): I never killed my father. I'd be afeard to do that, except I was the like of yourself with blind rages tearing me within, for I'm thinking you should have had great tussling when the end was come.

CHRISTY (*expanding with delight at the first confidential talk he has ever had with a woman*): We had not then. It was a hard woman was come over the hill, and if he was always a crusty kind when he'd a hard woman setting him on, not the divil himself or his four fathers could put up with him at all.

PEGEEN (*with curiosity*): And isn't it a great wonder that one wasn't fearing you?

CHRISTY (*very confidentially*): Up to the day I killed my father, there wasn't a person in Ireland knew the kind I was, and I there drinking, waking, eating, sleeping, a quiet, simple poor fellow with no man giving me heed.

PEGEEN (*getting a quilt out of the cupboard and putting it on the sack*): It was the girls were giving you heed maybe, and I'm thinking it's most conceit you'd have to be gaming with their like.

CHRISTY (*shaking his head, with simplicity*): Not the girls itself, and I won't tell you a lie. There wasn't anyone heeding me in that place saving only the dumb beasts of the field. (*He sits down at fire.*)

PEGEEN (*with disappointment*): And I thinking you should have been living the like of a king of Norway or the Eastern world. (*She comes and sits beside him after placing bread and mug of milk on the table.*)

CHRISTY (*laughing piteously*): The like of a king, is it? And I after toiling, moiling, digging, dodging from the dawn till dusk with never a sight of joy or sport saving only when I'd be abroad in the dark night poaching rabbits on hills, for I was a divil to poach, God forgive me, (*very naïvely*) and I near got six months for going with a dung fork and stabbing a fish.

PEGEEN: And it's that you'd call sport, is it, to be abroad in the darkness with yourself alone?

CHRISTY: I did, God help me, and there I'd be as happy as the sunshine of St. Martin's Day, watching the light passing the north or the patches of fog, till I'd hear a rabbit starting to screech and I'd go running in the furze. Then when I'd my full share I'd come walking down where you'd see the ducks and geese stretched sleeping on the highway of the road, and before I'd pass the dunghill, I'd hear himself snoring out, a loud lonesome snore he'd be making all times, the while he was sleeping, and he a man 'd be raging all times, the while he was waking, like a gaudy officer you'd hear cursing and damning and swearing oaths.

PEGEEN: Providence and Mercy, spare us all!

CHRISTY: It's that you'd say surely if you seen him and he after drinking for weeks, rising up in the red dawn, or before it maybe, and going out into the yard as naked as an ash tree in the moon of May, and shying clods against the visage of the stars till he'd put the fear of death into the banbhs and the screeching sows.

PEGEEN: I'd be well-nigh afeard of that lad myself, I'm thinking. And there was no one in it but the two of you alone?

CHRISTY: The divil a one, though he'd sons and daughters walking all great states and territories of the world, and not a one of them,

to this day, but would say their seven curses on him, and they rousing up to let a cough or sneeze, maybe, in the deadness of the night.

PEGEEN (*nodding her head*): Well, you should have been a queer lot. I never cursed my father the like of that, though I'm twenty and more years of age.

CHRISTY: Then you'd have cursed mine, I'm telling you, and he a man never gave peace to any, saving when he'd get two months or three, or be locked in the asylums for battering peelers or assaulting men (*with depression*) the way it was a bitter life he led me till I did up a Tuesday and halve his skull.

PEGEEN (*putting her hand on his shoulder*): Well, you'll have peace in this place, Christy Mahon, and none to trouble you, and it's near time a fine lad like you should have your good share of the earth.

CHRISTY: It's time surely, and I a seemly fellow with great strength in me and bravery of . . .

(*Someone knocks.*)

CHRISTY (*clinging to* PEGEEN): Oh, glory! it's late for knocking, and this last while I'm in terror of the peelers, and the walking dead.

(*Knocking again.*)

PEGEEN: Who's there?

VOICE (*outside*): Me.

PEGEEN: Who's me?

VOICE: The Widow Quin.

PEGEEN (*jumping up and giving him the bread and milk*): Go on now with your supper, and let on to be sleepy, for if she found you were such a warrant to talk, she'd be stringing gabble till the dawn of day. (*He takes bread and sits shyly with his back to the door.*)

PEGEEN (*opening door, with temper*): What ails you, or what is it you're wanting at this hour of the night?

WIDOW QUIN (*coming in a step and peering at* CHRISTY): I'm after meeting Shawn Keogh and Father Reilly below, who told me of your curiosity man, and they fearing by this time he was maybe roaring, romping on your hands with drink.

PEGEEN (*pointing to* CHRISTY): Look now is he roaring, and he stretched away drowsy with his supper and his mug of milk. Walk down and tell that to Father Reilly and to Shaneen Keogh.

WIDOW QUINN (*coming forward*): I'll not see them again, for I've their word to lead that lad forward for to lodge with me.

PEGEEN (*in blank amazement*): This night, is it?

WIDOW QUIN (*going over*): This night. "It isn't fitting," says the priesteen, "to have his likeness lodging with an orphaned girl." (*To* CHRISTY) God save you, mister!

CHRISTY (*shyly*): God save you kindly.

WIDOW QUIN (*looking at him with half-amazed curiosity*): Well, aren't you a little smiling fellow? It should have been great and bitter torments did rouse your spirits to a deed of blood.

CHRISTY (*doubtfully*): It should, maybe.

WIDOW QUIN: It's more than "maybe" I'm saying, and it'd soften my heart to see you sitting so simple with your cup and cake, and you fitter to be saying your catechism than slaying your da.

PEGEEN (*at counter, washing glasses*): There's talking when any'd see he's fit to be holding his head high with the wonders of the world. Walk on from this, for I'll not have him tormented and he destroyed travelling since Tuesday was a week.

WIDOW QUIN (*peaceably*): We'll be walking surely when his supper's done, and you'll find we're great company, young fellow, when it's of the like of you and me you'd hear the penny poets singing in an August Fair.

CHRISTY (*innocently*): Did you kill your father?

PEGEEN (*contemptuously*): She did not. She hit himself with a worn pick, and the rusted poison did corrode his blood the way he never overed it, and died after. That was a sneaky kind of murder did win small glory with the boys itself. (*She crosses to* CHRISTY's *left.*)

WIDOW QUIN (*with good-humour*): If it didn't, maybe all knows a widow woman has buried her children and destroyed her man is a wiser comrade for a young lad than a girl, the like of you, who'd go helter-skeltering after any man would let you a wink upon the road.

PEGEEN (*breaking out into wild rage*): And you'll say that, Widow Quin, and you gasping with the rage you had racing the hill beyond to look on his face.

WIDOW QUIN (*laughing derisively*): Me, is it? Well, Father Reilly has cuteness to divide you now. (*She pulls* CHRISTY *up*) There's great temptation in a man did slay his da, and we'd best be going, young fellow; so rise up and come with me.

PEGEEN (*seizing his arm*): He'll not stir. He's pot-boy in this place, and I'll not have him stolen off and kidnabbed while himself's abroad.

WIDOW QUIN: It'd be a crazy pot-boy'd lodge him in the shebeen where he works by day, so you'd have a right to come on, young fellow, till you see my little houseen, a perch off on the rising hill.

PEGEEN: Wait till morning, Christy Mahon. Wait till you lay eyes on her leaky thatch is growing more pasture for her buck goat than her square of fields, and she without a tramp itself to keep in order her place at all.

WIDOW QUIN: When you see me contriving in my little gardens, Christy Mahon, you'll swear the Lord God formed me to be living lone, and that there isn't my match in Mayo for thatching, or mowing, or shearing a sheep.

PEGEEN (*with noisy scorn*): It's true the Lord God formed you to contrive indeed. Doesn't the world know you reared a black lamb at your own breast, so that the Lord Bishop of Connaught felt the elements of a Christian, and he eating it after in a kidney stew? Doesn't the world know you've been seen shaving the foxy skipper from France for a threepenny bit and a sop of grass tobacco would wring the liver from a mountain goat you'd meet leaping the hills?

WIDOW QUIN (*with amusement*): Do you hear her now, young fellow? Do you hear the way she'll be rating at your own self when a week is by?

PEGEEN (*to* CHRISTY): Don't heed her. Tell her to go into her pigsty and not plague us here.

WIDOW QUIN: I'm going; but he'll come with me.

PEGEEN (*shaking him*): Are you dumb, young fellow?

CHRISTY (*timidly, to* WIDOW QUIN): God increase you; but I'm pot-boy in this place, and it's here I'd liefer stay.

PEGEEN (*triumphantly*): Now you have heard him, and go on from this.

WIDOW QUIN (*looking round the room*): It's lonesome this hour crossing the hill, and if he won't come along with me, I'd have a right maybe to stop this night with yourselves. Let me stretch out on the settle, Pegeen Mike; and himself can lie by the hearth.

PEGEEN (*short and fiercely*): Faith, I won't. Quit off or I will send you now.

WIDOW QUIN (*gathering her shawl up*): Well, it's a terror to be aged a score. (*To* CHRISTY) God bless you now, young fellow, and let you be wary, or there's right torment will await you here if you go romancing with her like, and she waiting only, as they bade me say, on a sheepskin parchment to be wed with Shawn Keogh of Killakeen.

CHRISTY (*going to* PEGEEN *as she bolts the door*): What's that she's after saying?

PEGEEN: Lies and blather, you've no call to mind. Well, isn't Shawn Keogh an impudent fellow to send up spying on me? Wait till I lay hands on him. Let him wait, I'm saying.

CHRISTY: And you're not wedding him at all?

PEGEEN: I wouldn't wed him if a bishop came walking for to join us here.

CHRISTY: That God in glory may be thanked for that.

PEGEEN: There's your bed now. I've put a quilt upon you I'm after quilting a while since with my own two hands, and you'd best stretch out now for your sleep, and may God give you a good rest till I call you in the morning when the cocks will crow.

CHRISTY (*as she goes to inner room*): May God and Mary and St. Patrick bless you and reward you, for your kindly talk. (*She shuts the door behind her. He settles his bed slowly, feeling the quilt with immense satisfaction*) Well, it's a clean bed and soft with it, and it's great luck and company I've won me in the end of time—two fine women fighting for the likes of me—till I'm thinking this night wasn't I a foolish fellow not to kill my father in the years gone by.

(*The Curtain Falls.*)

Act Two

SCENE, *as before. Brilliant morning light.* CHRISTY, *looking bright and cheerful, is cleaning a girl's boots.*

CHRISTY (*to himself, counting jugs on dresser*): Half a hundred beyond. Ten there. A score that's above. Eighty jugs. Six cups and a broken one. Two plates. A power of glasses. Bottles, a schoolmaster'd be hard set to count, and enough in them, I'm thinking, to drunken all the wealth and wisdom of the County Clare. (*He puts down the boot carefully*) There's her boots now, nice and decent for evening use, and isn't it grand brushes she has? (*He puts them down and goes by degrees to the looking-glass*) Well, this'd be a fine place to be my whole life talking out with swearing Christians, in place of my old dogs and cat, and I stalking around, smoking my pipe and drinking my fill, and never a day's work but drawing a cork an odd time, or wiping a glass, or rinsing out a shiny tumbler for a decent man. (*He takes the looking-glass from the wall and puts it on the back of a chair; then sits down in front of it and begins washing his face*) Didn't I know rightly I was handsome, though it was the divil's own mirror we had beyond, would twist a squint across an angel's brow; and I'll be growing fine from this day, the way I'll have a soft lovely skin on me and won't be the like of the clumsy young fellows do be ploughing all times in the earth and dung. (*He starts*) Is she coming again? (*He looks out*) Stranger girls. God help me, where'll I hide myself away and my long neck naked to the world? (*He looks out*) I'd best go to the room maybe till I'm dressed again. (*He gathers up his coat and the looking-glass, and runs into the inner room. The door is pushed open, and* SUSAN BRADY *looks in, and knocks on door.*)

SUSAN: There's nobody in it. (*Knocks again*)

NELLY (*pushing her in and following her, with* HONOR BLAKE *and* SARA TANSEY): It'd be early for them both to be out walking the hill.

SUSAN: I'm thinking Shawn Keogh was making game of us and there's no such man in it at all.

HONOR (*pointing to straw and quilt*): Look at that. He's been sleeping there in the night. Well, it'll be a hard case if he's gone off now, the way we'll never set eyes on a man killed his father, and we after rising early and destroying ourselves running fast on the hill.

NELLY: Are you thinking them's his boots?

SARA (*taking them up*): If they are, there should be his father's track on them. Did you never read in the papers the way murdered men do bleed and drip?

SUSAN: Is that blood there, Sara Tansey?

SARA (*smelling it*): That's bog water, I'm thinking, but it's his own they are surely, for I never seen the like of them for whity mud, and red mud, and turf on them, and the fine sands of the sea. That man's been walking, I'm telling you. (*She goes down right, putting on one of his boots.*)

SUSAN (*going to window*): Maybe he's stolen off to Belmullet with the boots of Michael James, and you'd have a right so to follow after him, Sara Tansey, and you the one yoked the ass cart and drove ten miles to set your eyes on the man bit the yellow lady's nostril on the northern shore. (*She looks out.*)

SARA (*running to window with one boot on*): Don't be talking, and we fooled to-day. (*Putting on other boot*) There's a pair do fit me well, and I'll be keeping them for walking to the priest, when you'd be ashamed this place, going up winter and summer with nothing worth while to confess at all.

HONOR (*who has been listening at the door*): Whisht! there's someone inside the room. (*She pushes door a chink open*) It's a man.

(SARA *kicks off boots and puts them where they were. They all stand in a line looking through chink.*)

SARA: I'll call him. Mister! Mister! (*He puts in his head*) Is Pegeen within?

CHRISTY (*coming in as meek as a mouse, with the looking-glass held behind his back*): She's above on the cnuceen, seeking the nanny goats, the way she'd have a sup of goat's milk for to colour my tea.

SARA: And asking your pardon, is it you's the man killed his father?

CHRISTY (*sidling toward the nail where the glass was hanging*): I am, God help me!

SARA (*taking eggs she has brought*): Then my thousand welcomes to you, and I've run up with a brace of duck's eggs for your food today. Pegeen's ducks is no use, but these are the real rich sort. Hold out your hand and you'll see it's no lie I'm telling you.

CHRISTY (*coming forward shyly, and holding out his left hand*): They're a great and weighty size.

SUSAN: And I run up with a pat of butter, for it'd be a poor thing to have you eating your spuds dry, and you after running a great way since you did destroy your da.

CHRISTY: Thank you kindly.

HONOR: And I brought you a little cut of cake, for you should have a thin stomach on you, and you that length walking the world.

NELLY: And I brought you a little laying pullet—boiled and all she is—was crushed at the fall of night by the curate's car. Feel the fat of that breast, mister.

CHRISTY: It's bursting, surely. (*He feels it with the back of his hand, in which he holds the presents.*)

SARA: Will you pinch it? Is your right hand too sacred for to use at all? (*She slips round behind him*) It's a glass he has. Well, I never seen to this day a man with a looking-glass held to his back. Them that kills their fathers is a vain lot surely.

(*Girls giggle.*)

CHRISTY (*smiling innocently and piling presents on glass*): I'm very thankful to you all today . . .

WIDOW QUIN (*coming in quickly, at door*): Sara Tansey, Susan Brady, Honor Blake! What in glory has you here at this hour of day?

GIRLS (*giggling*): That's the man killed his father.

WIDOW QUIN (*coming to them*): I know well it's the man; and I'm after putting him down in the sports below for racing, leaping, pitching, and the Lord knows what.

SARA (*exuberantly*): That's right, Widow Quin. I'll bet my dowry that he'll lick the world

WIDOW QUIN: If you will, you'd have a right to have him fresh and nourished in place of nursing a feast. (*Taking presents*) Are you fasting or fed, young fellow?

CHRISTY: Fasting, if you please.

WIDOW QUIN (*loudly*): Well, you're the lot. Stir up now and give him his breakfast. (*To* CHRISTY) Come here to me (*she puts him on bench beside her while the girls make tea and get his breakfast*) and let you tell us your story before Pegeen will come, in place of grinning your ears off like the moon of May.

CHRISTY (*beginning to be pleased*): It's a long story; you'd be destroyed listening.

WIDOW QUIN: Don't be letting on to be shy, a fine, gamey, treacherous lad the like of you. Was it in your house beyond you cracked his skull?

CHRISTY (*shy but flattered*): It was not. We were digging spuds in his cold, sloping, stony, divil's patch of a field.

WIDOW QUIN: And you went asking money of him, or making talk of getting a wife would drive him from his farm?

CHRISTY: I did not, then; but there I was, digging and digging, and "You squinting idiot," says he, "let you walk down now and tell the priest you'll wed the Widow Casey in a score of days."

WIDOW QUIN: And what kind was she?

CHRISTY (*with horror*): A walking terror from beyond the hills, and she two score and five years, and two hundredweights and five pounds in the weighing scales, with a limping leg on her, and a blinded eye, and she a woman of noted misbehavior with the old and young.

GIRLS (*clustering round him, serving him*): Glory be.

WIDOW QUIN: And what did he want driving you to wed with her? (*She takes a bit of the chicken.*)

CHRISTY (*eating with growing satisfaction*): He was letting on I was wanting a protector from the harshness of the world, and he without a thought the whole while but how he'd have her hut to live in and her gold to drink.

WIDOW QUIN: There's maybe worse than a dry hearth and a widow woman and your glass at night. So you hit him then?

CHRISTY (*getting almost excited*): I did not. "I won't wed her," says I, "when all know she did suckle me for six weeks when I came into the world, and she a hag this day with a tongue on her has the crows and seabirds scattered, the way they would cast a shadow on her garden with the dread of her curse."

WIDOW QUIN (*teasingly*): That one should be right company.

SARA (*eagerly*): Don't mind her. Did you kill him then?

CHRISTY: "She's too good for the like of you," says he, "and go on now or I'll flatten you out like a crawling beast has passed under a dray." "You will not if I can help it," says I. "Go on," says he, "or I'll have the divil making garters of your limbs tonight." "You will not if I can help it," says I. (*He sits up, brandishing his mug.*)

SARA: You were right surely.

CHRISTY (*impressively*): With that the sun came out between the cloud and the hill, and it shining green in my face. "God have mercy on your soul," says he, lifting a scythe; "or on your own," says I, raising the loy.

SUSAN: That's a grand story.

HONOR: He tells it lovely.

CHRISTY (*flattered and confident, waving bone*): He gave a drive with the scythe, and I gave a lep to the east. Then I turned around with my back to the north, and I hit a blow on the ridge of his skull, laid him stretched out, and he split to the knob of his gullet. (*He raises the chicken bone to his Adam's apple.*)

GIRLS (*together*): Well, you're a marvel! Oh, God bless you! You're the lad surely!

SUSAN: I'm thinking the Lord God sent him this road to make a second husband to the Widow Quin, and she with a great yearning

to be wedded, though all dread her here. Lift him on her knee, Sara Tansey.

WIDOW QUIN: Don't tease him.

SARA (*going over to dresser and counter very quickly, and getting two glasses and porter*): You're heroes surely, and let you drink a supeen with your arms linked like the outlandish lovers in the sailor's song. (*She links their arms and gives them the glasses*) There now. Drink a health to the wonders of the western world, the pirates, preachers, poteen-makers, with the jobbing jockies; parching peelers, and the juries fill their stomachs selling judgments of the English law. (*Brandishing the bottle.*)

WIDOW QUIN: That's a right toast, Sara Tansey. Now, Christy.

(*They drink with their arms linked, he drinking with his left hand, she with her right. As they are drinking,* PEGEEN MIKE *comes in with a milk can and stands aghast. They all spring away from* CHRISTY. *He goes down left.* WIDOW QUIN *remains seated.*)

PEGEEN (*angrily, to* SARA): What is it you're wanting?

SARA (*twisting her apron*): An ounce of tobacco.

PEGEEN: Have you tuppence?

SARA: I've forgotten my purse.

PEGEEN: Then you'd best be getting it and not fooling us here. (*To the* WIDOW QUIN, *with more elaborate scorn*) And what is it you're wanting, Widow Quin?

WIDOW QUIN (*insolently*): A penn'orth of starch.

PEGEEN (*breaking out*): And you without a white shift or a shirt in your whole family since the drying of the flood. I've no starch for the like of you, and let you walk on now to Killamuck.

WIDOW QUIN (*turning to* CHRISTY, *as she goes out with the girls*): Well, you're mighty huffy this day, Pegeen Mike, and, you young fellow, let you not forget the sports and racing when the noon is by.

(*They go out.*)

PEGEEN (*imperiously*): Fling out that rubbish and put them cups away. (CHRISTY *tidies away in great haste*) Shove in the bench by

the wall. (*He does so*) And hang that glass on the nail. What disturbed it at all?

CHRISTY (*very meekly*): I was making myself decent only, and this a fine country for young lovely girls.

PEGEEN (*sharply*): Whisht your talking of girls. (*Goes to counter —right.*)

CHRISTY: Wouldn't any wish to be decent in a place . . .

PEGEEN: Whisht I'm saying.

CHRISTY (*looks at her face for a moment with great misgivings, then as a last effort, takes up a loy, and goes towards her, with feigned assurance*): It was with a loy the like of that I killed my father.

PEGEEN (*still sharply*): You've told me that story six times since the dawn of day.

CHRISTY (*reproachfully*): It's a queer thing you wouldn't care to be hearing it and them girls after walking four miles to be listening to me now.

PEGEEN (*turning around astonished*): Four miles.

CHRISTY (*apologetically*): Didn't himself say there were only four bona fides living in the place?

PEGEEN: It's bona fides by the road they are, but that lot came over the river lepping the stones. It's not three perches when you go like that, and I was down this morning looking on the papers the postboy does have in his bag. (*With meaning and emphasis*) For there was great news this day, Christopher Mahon. (*She goes into room left.*)

CHRISTY (*suspiciously*): Is it news of my murder?

PEGEEN (*inside*): Murder, indeed.

CHRISTY (*loudly*): A murdered da?

PEGEEN (*coming in again and crossing right*): There was not, but a story filled half a page of the hanging of a man. Ah, that should be a fearful end, young fellow, and it worst of all for a man who destroyed his da, for the like of him would get small mercies, and when

it's dead he is, they'd put him in a narrow grave, with cheap sacking wrapping him round, and pour down quicklime on his head, the way you'd see a woman pouring any frish-frash from a cup.

CHRISTY (*very miserably*): Oh, God help me. Are you thinking I'm safe? You were saying at the fall of night, I was shut of jeopardy and I here with yourselves.

PEGEEN (*severely*): You'll be shut of jeopardy in no place if you go talking with a pack of wild girls the like of them do be walking abroad with the peelers, talking whispers at the fall of night.

CHRISTY (*with terror*): And you're thinking they'd tell?

PEGEEN (*with mock sympathy*): Who knows, God help you.

CHRISTY (*loudly*): What joy would they have to bring hanging to the likes of me?

PEGEEN: It's queer joys they have, and who knows the thing they'd do, if it'd make the green stones cry itself to think of you swaying and swiggling at the butt of a rope, and you with a fine, stout neck, God bless you! the way you'd be a half an hour, in great anguish, getting your death.

CHRISTY (*getting his boots and putting them on*): If there's that terror of them, it'd be best, maybe, I went on wandering like Esau or Cain and Abel on the other sides of Neifin or the Erris plain.

PEGEEN (*beginning to play with him*): It would, maybe, for I've heard the Circuit Judges this place is a heartless crew.

CHRISTY (*bitterly*): It's more than Judges this place is a heartless crew. (*Looking up at her*) And isn't it a poor thing to be starting again and I a lonesome fellow will be looking out on women and girls the way the needy fallen spirits do be looking on the Lord?

PEGEEN: What call have you to be that lonesome when there's poor girls walking Mayo in their thousands now?

CHRISTY (*grimly*): It's well you know what call I have. It's well you know it's a lonesome thing to be passing small towns with the lights shining sideways when the night is down, or going in strange places with a dog noising before you and a dog noising behind, or drawn to the cities where you'd hear a voice kissing and talking deep love in every shadow of the ditch, and you passing on with an empty, hungry stomach failing from your heart.

PEGEEN: I'm thinking you're an odd man, Christy Mahon. The oddest walking fellow I ever set my eyes on to this hour today.

CHRISTY: What would any be but odd men and they living lonesome in the world?

PEGEEN: I'm not odd, and I'm my whole life with my father only.

CHRISTY (*with infinite admiration*): How would a lovely handsome woman the like of you be lonesome when all men should be thronging around to hear the sweetness of your voice, and the little infant children should be pestering your steps I'm thinking, and you walking the roads.

PEGEEN: I'm hard set to know what way a coaxing fellow the like of yourself should be lonesome either.

CHRISTY: Coaxing?

PEGEEN: Would you have me think a man never talked with the girls would have the words you've spoken today? It's only letting on you are to be lonesome, the way you'd get around me now.

CHRISTY: I wish to God I was letting on; but I was lonesome all times, and born lonesome, I'm thinking, as the moon of dawn. (*Going to door.*)

PEGEEN (*puzzled by his talk*): Well, it's a story I'm not understanding at all why you'd be worse than another, Christy Mahon, and you a fine lad with the great savagery to destroy your da.

CHRISTY: It's little I'm understanding myself, saving only that my heart's scalded this day, and I am going off stretching out the earth between us, the way I'll not be walking near you another dawn of the year till the two of us do arise to hope or judgment with the saints of God, and now I'd best be going with my wattle in my hand, for hanging is a poor thing (*turning to go*), and it's little welcome only is left me in this house today.

PEGEEN (*sharply*): Christy! (*He turns round*) Come here to me. (*He goes towards her*) Lay down that switch and throw some sods on the fire. You're pot-boy in this place, and I'll not have you mitch off from us now.

CHRISTY: You were saying I'd be hanged if I stay.

PEGEEN (*quite kindly at last*): I'm after going down and reading the fearful crimes of Ireland for two weeks or three, and there wasn't a word of your murder. (*Getting up and going over to the counter*) They've likely not found the body. You're safe so with ourselves.

CHRISTY (*astonished, slowly*): It's making game of me you were (*following her with fearful joy*), and I can stay so, working at your side, and I not lonesome from this mortal day.

PEGEEN: What's to hinder you from staying, except the widow woman or the young girls would inveigle you off?

CHRISTY (*with rapture*): And I'll have your words from this day filling my ears, and that look is come upon you meeting my two eyes, and I watching you loafing around in the warm sun, or rinsing your ankles when the night is come.

PEGEEN (*kindly, but a little embarrassed*): I'm thinking you'll be a loyal young lad to have working around, and if you vexed me a while since with your leaguing with the girls, I wouldn't give a thraneen for a lad hadn't a mighty spirit in him and a gamey heart.

(SHAWN KEOGH *runs in carrying a cleeve on his back, followed by the* WIDOW QUIN.)

SHAWN (*to* PEGEEN): I was passing below, and I seen your mountainy sheep eating cabbages in Jimmy's field. Run up or they'll be bursting surely.

PEGEEN: Oh, God mend them! (*She puts a shawl over her head and runs out.*)

CHRISTY (*looking from one to the other. Still in high spirits*): I'd best go to her aid maybe. I'm handy with ewes.

WIDOW QUIN (*closing the door*): She can do that much, and there is Shaneen has long speeches for to tell you now. (*She sits down with an amused smile.*)

SHAWN (*taking something from his pocket and offering it to* CHRISTY): Do you see that, mister?

CHRISTY (*looking at it*): The half of a ticket to the Western States!

SHAWN (*trembling with anxiety*): I'll give it to you and my new hat (*pulling it out of hamper*); and my breeches with the double seat

(*pulling it off*); and my new coat is woven from the blackest shearings for three miles around (*giving him the coat*); I'll give you the whole of them, and my blessing, and the blessing of Father Reilly itself, maybe, if you'll quit from this and leave us in the peace we had till last night at the fall of dark.

CHRISTY (*with a new arrogance*): And for what is it you're wanting to get shut of me?

SHAWN (*looking to the* WIDOW *for help*): I'm a poor scholar with middling faculties to coin a lie, so I'll tell you the truth, Christy Mahon. I'm wedding with Pegeen beyond, and I don't think well of having a clever fearless man the like of you dwelling in her house.

CHRISTY (*almost pugnaciously*): And you'd be using bribery for to banish me?

SHAWN (*in an imploring voice*): Let you not take it badly, mister honey, isn't beyond the best place for you where you'll have golden chains and shiny coats and you riding upon hunters with the ladies of the land. (*He makes an eager sign to the* WIDOW QUIN *to come to help him.*)

WIDOW QUIN (*coming over*): It's true for him, and you'd best quit off and not have that poor girl setting her mind on you, for there's Shaneen thinks she wouldn't suit you though all is saying that she'll wed you now.

(CHRISTY *beams with delight.*)

SHAWN (*in terrified earnest*): She wouldn't suit you, and she with the divil's own temper the way you'd be strangling one another in a score of days. (*He makes the movement of strangling with his hands*) It's the like of me only that she's fit for, a quiet simple fellow wouldn't raise a hand upon her if she scratched itself.

WIDOW QUIN (*putting* SHAWN'S *hat on* CHRISTY): Fit them clothes on you anyhow, young fellow, and he'd maybe loan them to you for the sports. (*Pushing him towards inner door*) Fit them on and you can give your answer when you have them tried.

CHRISTY (*beaming, delighted with the clothes*): I will then. I'd like herself to see me in them tweeds and hat. (*He goes into room and shuts the door.*)

SHAWN (*in great anxiety*): He'd like herself to see them. He'll not leave us, Widow Quin. He's a score of divils in him the way it's well nigh certain he will wed Pegeen.

WIDOW QUIN (*jeeringly*): It's true all girls are fond of courage and do hate the like of you.

SHAWN (*walking about in desperation*): Oh, Widow Quin, what'll I be doing now? I'd inform again him, but he'd burst from Kilmainham and he'd be sure and certain to destroy me. If I wasn't so God-fearing, I'd near have courage to come behind him and run a pike into his side. Oh, it's a hard case to be an orphan and not to have your father that you're used to, and you'd easy kill and make yourself a hero in the sight of all. (*Coming up to her*) Oh, Widow Quin, will you find me some contrivance when I've promised you a ewe?

WIDOW QUIN: A ewe's a small thing, but what would you give me if I did wed him and did save you so?

SHAWN (*with astonishment*): You?

WIDOW QUIN: Aye. Would you give me the red cow you have and the mountainy ram, and the right of way across your rye path, and a load of dung at Michaelmas, and turbary upon the western hill?

SHAWN (*radiant with hope*): I would surely, and I'd give you the wedding-ring I have, and the loan of a new suit, the way you'd have him decent on the wedding-day. I'd give you two kids for your dinner, and a gallon of poteen, and I'd call the piper on the long car to your wedding from Crossmolina or from Ballina. I'd give you . . .

WIDOW QUIN: That'll do so, and let you whisht, for he's coming now again.

(CHRISTY *comes in very natty in the new clothes.* WIDOW QUIN *goes to him admiringly.*)

WIDOW QUIN: If you seen yourself now, I'm thinking you'd be too proud to speak to us at all, and it'd be a pity surely to have your like sailing from Mayo to the Western World.

CHRISTY (*as proud as a peacock*): I'm not going. If this is a poor place itself, I'll make myself contented to be lodging here.

(WIDOW QUIN *makes a sign to* SHAWN *to leave them.*)

SHAWN: Well, I'm going measuring the race-course while the tide is low, so I'll leave you the garments and my blessing for the sports today. God bless you! (*He wriggles out.*)

WIDOW QUIN (*admiring* CHRISTY): Well, you're mighty spruce, young fellow. Sit down now while you're quiet till you talk with me.

CHRISTY (*swaggering*): I'm going abroad on the hillside for to seek Pegeen.

WIDOW QUIN: You'll have time and plenty for to seek Pegeen, and you heard me saying at the fall of night the two of us should be great company.

CHRISTY: From this out I'll have no want of company when all sorts is bringing me their food and clothing (*he swaggers to the door, tightening his belt*), the way they'd set their eyes upon a gallant orphan cleft his father with one blow to the breeches belt. (*He opens door, then staggers back*) Saints of glory! Holy angels from the throne of light!

WIDOW QUIN (*going over*): What ails you?

CHRISTY: It's the walking spirit of my murdered da?

WIDOW QUIN (*looking out*): Is it that tramper?

CHRISTY (*wildly*): Where'll I hide my poor body from that ghost of hell?

(*The door is pushed open, and old* MAHON *appears on threshold.* CHRISTY *darts in behind door.*)

WIDOW QUIN (*in great amusement*): God save you, my poor man.

MAHON (*gruffly*): Did you see a young lad passing this way in the early morning or the fall of night?

WIDOW QUIN: You're a queer kind to walk in not saluting at all.

MAHON: Did you see the young lad?

WIDOW QUIN (*stiffly*): What kind was he?

MAHON: An ugly young streeler with a murderous gob on him, and a little switch in his hand. I met a tramper seen him coming this way at the fall of night.

WIDOW QUIN: There's harvest hundreds do be passing these days for the Sligo boat. For what is it you're wanting him, my poor man?

MAHON: I want to destroy him for breaking the head on me with the clout of a loy. (*He takes off a big hat, and shows his head in a mass of bandages and plaster, with some pride*) It was he did that, and amn't I a great wonder to think I've traced him ten days with that rent in my crown?

WIDOW QUIN (*taking his head in both hands and examining it with extreme delight*): That was a great blow. And who hit you? A robber maybe?

MAHON: It was my own son hit me, and he the divil a robber, or anything else, but a dirty, stuttering lout.

WIDOW QUIN (*letting go his skull and wiping her hands in her apron*): You'd best be wary of a mortified scalp, I think they call it, lepping around with that wound in the splendour of the sun. It was a bad blow surely, and you should have vexed him fearful to make him strike that gash in his da.

MAHON: Is it me?

WIDOW QUIN (*amusing herself*): Aye. And isn't it a great shame when the old and hardened do torment the young?

MAHON (*raging*): Torment him is it? And I after holding out with the patience of a martyred saint till there's nothing but destruction on, and I'm driven out in my old age with none to aid me.

WIDOW QUIN (*greatly amused*): It's a sacred wonder the way that wickedness will spoil a man.

MAHON: My wickedness, is it? Amn't I after saying it is himself has me destroyed, and he a liar on walls, a talker of folly, a man you'd see stretched the half of the day in the brown ferns with his belly to the sun.

WIDOW QUIN: Not working at all?

MAHON: The divil a work, or if he did itself, you'd see him raising up a haystack like the stalk of a rush, or driving our last cow till he broke her leg at the hip, and when he wasn't at that he'd be fooling over little birds he had—finches and felts—or making mugs at his own self in the bit of a glass we had hung on the wall.

WIDOW QUIN (*looking at* CHRISTY): What way was he so foolish? It was running wild after the girls maybe?

MAHON (*with a shout of derision*): Running wild, is it? If he seen a red petticoat coming swinging over the hill, he'd be off to hide in the sticks, and you'd see him shooting out his sheep's eyes between the little twigs and the leaves, and his two ears rising like a hare looking out through a gap. Girls, indeed!

WIDOW QUIN: It was drink maybe?

MAHON: And he a poor fellow would get drunk on the smell of a pint. He'd a queer rotten stomach, I'm telling you, and when I gave him three pulls from my pipe a while since, he was taken with contortions till I had to send him in the ass cart to the females' nurse.

WIDOW QUIN (*clasping her hands*): Well, I never till this day heard tell of a man the like of that!

MAHON: I'd take a mighty oath you didn't surely, and wasn't he the laughing joke of every female woman where four baronies meet, the way the girls would stop their weeding if they seen him coming the road to let a roar at him, and call him the looney of Mahon's.

WIDOW QUIN: I'd give the world and all to see the like of him. What kind was he?

MAHON: A small low fellow.

WIDOW QUIN: And dark?

MAHON: Dark and dirty.

WIDOW QUIN (*considering*): I'm thinking I seen him.

MAHON (*eagerly*): An ugly young blackguard.

WIDOW QUIN: A hideous, fearful villain, and the spit of you.

MAHON: What way is he fled?

WIDOW QUIN: Gone over the hills to catch a coasting steamer to the north or south.

MAHON: Could I pull up on him now?

WIDOW QUIN: If you'll cross the sands below where the tide is out, you'll be in it as soon as himself, for he had to go round ten miles by the top of the bay. (*She points to the door*) Strike down by the head beyond and then follow on the roadway to the north and east.

(MAHON *goes abruptly.*)

WIDOW QUIN (*shouting after him*): Let you give him a good vengeance when you come up with him, but don't put yourself in the power of the law, for it'd be a poor thing to see a judge in his black cap reading out his sentence on a civil warrior the like of you. (*She swings the door to and looks at* CHRISTY, *who is cowering in terror, for a moment, then she bursts into a laugh.*)

WIDOW QUIN: Well, you're the walking Playboy of the Western World, and that's the poor man you had divided to his breeches belt.

CHRISTY (*looking out: then, to her*): What'll Pegeen say when she hears that story? What'll she be saying to me now?

WIDOW QUIN: She'll knock the head of you, I'm thinking, and drive you from the door. God help her to be taking you for a wonder, and you a little schemer making up the story you destroyed your da.

CHRISTY (*turning to the door, nearly speechless with rage, half to himself*): To be letting on he was dead, and coming back to his life, and following after me like an old weasel tracing a rat, and coming in here laying desolation between my own self and the fine women of Ireland, and he a kind of carcase that you'd fling upon the sea . . .

WIDOW QUIN (*more soberly*): There's talking for a man's one only son.

CHRISTY (*breaking out*): His one son, is it? May I meet him with one tooth and it aching, and one eye to be seeing seven and seventy divils in the twists of the road, and one old timber leg on him to limp into the scalding grave. (*Looking out*) There he is now crossing the strands, and that the Lord God would send a high wave to wash him from the world.

WIDOW QUIN (*scandalized*): Have you no shame? (*Putting her hand on his shoulder and turning him round*) What ails you? Near crying, is it?

CHRISTY (*in despair and grief*): Amn't I after seeing the lovelight of the star of knowledge shining from her brow, and hearing words would put you thinking on the holy Brigid speaking to the infant saints, and now she'll be turning again, and speaking hard words to me, like an old woman with a spavindy ass she'd have, urging on a hill.

WIDOW QUIN: There's poetry talk for a girl you'd see itching and scratching, and she with a stale stink of poteen on her from selling in the shop.

CHRISTY (*impatiently*): It's her like is fitted to be handling merchandise in the heavens above, and what'll I be doing now, I ask you, and I a kind of wonder was jilted by the heavens when a day was by.

(*There is a distant noise of girls' voices.* WIDOW QUIN *looks from window and comes to him, hurriedly.*)

WIDOW QUIN: You'll be doing like myself, I'm thinking, when I did destroy my man, for I'm above many's the day, odd times in great spirits, abroad in the sunshine, darning a stocking or stitching a shift; and odd times again looking out on the schooners, hookers, trawlers is sailing the sea, and I thinking on the gallant hairy fellows are drifting beyond, and myself long years living alone.

CHRISTY (*interested*): You're like me, so.

WIDOW QUIN: I am your like, and it's for that I'm taking a fancy to you, and I with my little houseen above where there'd be myself to tend you, and none to ask were you a murderer or what at all.

CHRISTY: And what would I be doing if I left Pegeen?

WIDOW QUIN: I've nice jobs you could be doing, gathering shells to make a whitewash for our hut within, building up a little goose-house, or stretching a new skin on an old curragh I have, and if my hut is far from all sides, it's there you'll meet the wisest old men, I tell you, at the corner of my wheel, and it's there yourself and me will have great times whispering and hugging. . . .

VOICES (*outside, calling far away*): Christy! Christy Mahon! Christy!

CHRISTY: Is it Pegeen Mike?

WIDOW QUIN: It's the young girls, I'm thinking, coming to bring you to the sports below, and what is it you'll have me to tell them now?

CHRISTY: Aid me for to win Pegeen. It's herself only that I'm seeking now. (WIDOW QUIN *gets up and goes to window*) Aid me for to win her, and I'll be asking God to stretch a hand to you in the hour of death, and lead you short cuts through the Meadows of Ease, and up the floor of Heaven to the Footstool of the Virgin's Son.

WIDOW QUIN: There's praying.

VOICES (*nearer*): Christy! Christy Mahon!

CHRISTY (*with agitation*): They're coming. Will you swear to aid and save me for the love of Christ?

WIDOW QUIN (*looks at him for a moment*): If I aid you, will you swear to give me a right of way I want, and a mountainy ram, and a load of dung at Michaelmas, the time that you'll be master here?

CHRISTY: I will, by the elements and stars of night.

WIDOW QUIN: Then we'll not say a word of the old fellow, the way Pegeen won't know your story till the end of time.

CHRISTY: And if he chances to return again?

WIDOW QUIN: We'll swear he's a maniac and not your da. I could take an oath I seen him raving on the sands today.

(*Girls run in.*)

SUSAN: Come on to the sports below. Pegeen says you're to come.

SARA TANSEY: The lepping's beginning, and we've a jockey's suit to fit upon you for the mule race on the sands below.

HONOR: Come on, will you?

CHRISTY: I will then if Pegeen's beyond.

SARA TANSEY: She's in the boreen making game of Shaneen Keogh.

CHRISTY: Then I'll be going to her now. (*He runs out followed by the girls.*)

WIDOW QUIN: Well, if the worst comes in the end of all, it'll be great game to see there's none to pity him but a widow woman, the like of me, has buried her children and destroyed her man. (*She goes out.*)

(*The Curtain Falls.*)

Act Three

SCENE, *as before. Later in the day.* JIMMY *comes in, slightly drunk.*

JIMMY (*calls*): Pegeen! (*Crosses to inner door*) Pegeen Mike! (*Comes back again into the room*) Pegeen! (PHILLY *comes in in the same state*) (*To* PHILLY) Did you see herself?

PHILLY: I did not; but I sent Shawn Keogh with the ass cart for to bear him home. (*Trying cupboards which are locked*) Well, isn't he a nasty man to get into such staggers at a morning wake? and isn't herself the divil's daughter for locking, and she so fussy after that young gaffer, you might take your death with drought and none to heed you?

JIMMY: It's little wonder she'd be fussy, and he after bringing bankrupt ruin on the roulette man, and the trick-o'-the-loop man, and breaking the nose of the cockshot-man, and winning all in the sports below, racing, lepping, dancing, and the Lord knows what! He's right luck, I'm telling you.

PHILLY: If he has, he'll be rightly hobbled yet, and he not able to say ten words without making a brag of the way he killed his father, and the great blow he hit with the loy.

JIMMY: A man can't hang by his own informing, and his father should be rotten by now.

(OLD MAHON *passes window slowly.*)

PHILLY: Supposing a man's digging spuds in that field with a long spade, and supposing he flings up the two halves of that skull, what'll be said then in the papers and the courts of law?

JIMMY: They'd say it was an old Dane, maybe, was drowned in the flood. (OLD MAHON *comes in and sits down near door listening*) Did you never hear tell of the skulls they have in the city of Dublin, ranged out like blue jugs in a cabin of Connaught?

PHILLY: And you believe that?

JIMMY (*pugnaciously*): Didn't a lad see them and he after coming from harvesting in the Liverpool boat? "They have them there," says he, "making a show of the great people there was one time walking the world. White skulls and black skulls and yellow skulls, and some with full teeth, and some haven't only but one."

PHILLY: It was no lie, maybe, for when I was a young lad there was a graveyard beyond the house with the remnants of a man who had thighs as long as your arm. He was a horrid man, I'm telling you, and there was many a fine Sunday I'd put him together for fun, and he with shiny bones, you wouldn't meet the like of these days in the cities of the world.

MAHON (*getting up*): You wouldn't, is it? Lay your eyes on that skull, and tell me where and when there was another the like of it, is splintered only from the blow of a loy.

PHILLY: Glory be to God! And who hit you at all?

MAHON (*triumphantly*): It was my own son hit me. Would you believe that?

JIMMY: Well, there's wonders hidden in the heart of man!

PHILLY (*suspiciously*): And what way was it done?

MAHON (*wandering about the room*): I'm after walking hundreds and long scores of miles, winning clean beds and the fill of my belly four times in the day, and I doing nothing but telling stories of that naked truth. (*He comes to them a little aggressively*) Give me a supeen and I'll tell you now.

(WIDOW QUIN *comes in and stands aghast behind him. He is facing* JIMMY *and* PHILLY, *who are on the left.*)

JIMMY: Ask herself beyond. She's the stuff hidden in her shawl.

WIDOW QUIN (*coming to* MAHON *quickly*): You here, is it? You didn't go far at all?

MAHON: I seen the coasting steamer passing, and I got a drought upon me and a cramping leg, so I said, "The divil go along with him," and turned again. (*Looking under her shawl*) And let you give me a supeen, for I'm destroyed travelling since Tuesday was a week.

WIDOW QUIN (*getting a glass, in a cajoling tone*): Sit down then by the fire and take your ease for a space. You've a right to be destroyed indeed, with your walking, and fighting, and facing the sun. (*Giving him poteen from a stone jar she has brought in*) There now is a drink for you, and may it be to your happiness and length of life.

MAHON (*taking glass greedily and sitting down by fire*): God increase you!

WIDOW QUIN (*taking men to the right stealthily*): Do you know what? That man's raving from his wound today, for I met him a while since telling a rambling tale of a tinker had him destroyed. Then he heard of Christy's deed, and he up and says it was his son had cracked his skull. O isn't madness a fright, for he'll go killing someone yet, and he thinking it's the man has struck him so?

JIMMY (*entirely convinced*): It's a fright, surely. I knew a party was kicked in the head by a red mare, and he went killing horses a great while, till he eat the insides of a clock and died after.

PHILLY (*with suspicion*): Did he see Christy?

WIDOW QUIN: He didn't. (*With a warning gesture*) Let you not be putting him in mind of him, or you'll be likely summoned if there's murder done. (*Looking round at* MAHON) Whisht! He's listening. Wait now till you hear me taking him easy and unravelling all. (*She goes to* MAHON) And what way are you feeling, mister? Are you in contentment now?

MAHON (*slightly emotional from his drink*): I'm poorly only, for it's a hard story the way I'm left today, when it was I did tend him from his hour of birth, and he a dunce never reached his second book, the way he'd come from school, many's the day, with his legs lamed under him, and he blackened with his beatings like a tinker's ass. It's a hard story, I'm saying, the way some do have their next and nighest raising up a hand of murder on them, and some is lonesome getting their death with lamentation in the dead of night.

WIDOW QUIN (*not knowing what to say*): To hear you talking so quiet, who'd know you were the same fellow we seen pass today?

MAHON: I'm the same surely. The wrack and ruin of three score years; and it's a terror to live that length, I tell you, and to have your

sons going to the dogs against you, and you wore out scolding them, and skelping them, and God knows what.

PHILLY (*to* JIMMY): He's not raving. (*To* WIDOW QUIN) Will you ask him what kind was his son?

WIDOW QUIN (*to* MAHON, *with a peculiar look*): Was your son that hit you a lad of one year and a score maybe, a great hand at racing and lepping and licking the world?

MAHON (*turning on her with a roar of rage*): Didn't you hear me say he was the fool of men, the way from this out he'll know the orphan's lot with old and young making game of him and they swearing, raging, kicking at him like a mangy cur.

(*A great burst of cheering outside, some way off.*)

MAHON (*putting his hands to his ears*): What in the name of God do they want roaring below?

WIDOW QUIN (*with the shade of a smile*): They're cheering a young lad, the champion Playboy of the Western World.

(*More cheering.*)

MAHON (*going to window*): It'd split my heart to hear them, and I with pulses in my brain-pan for a week gone by. Is it racing they are?

JIMMY (*looking from door*): It is then. They are mounting him for the mule race will be run upon the sands. That's the playboy on the winkered mule.

MAHON (*puzzled*): That lad, is it? If you said it was a fool he was, I'd have laid a mighty oath he was the likeness of my wandering son. (*Uneasily, putting his hand to his head*) Faith, I'm thinking I'll go walking for to view the race.

WIDOW QUIN (*stopping him, sharply*): You will not. You'd best take the road to Belmullet, and not be dilly-dallying in this place where there isn't a spot you could sleep.

PHILLY (*coming forward*): Don't mind her. Mount there on the bench and you'll have a view of the whole. They're hurrying before the tide will rise, and it'd be near over if you went down the pathway through the crags below.

MAHON (*mounts on bench,* WIDOW QUIN *beside him*): That's a right view again the edge of the sea. They're coming now from the point. He's leading. Who is he at all?

WIDOW QUIN: He's the champion of the world, I tell you, and there isn't a hop'orth isn't falling lucky to his hands today.

PHILLY (*looking out, interested in the race*): Look at that. They're pressing him now.

JIMMY: He'll win it yet.

PHILLY: Take your time, Jimmy Farrell. It's too soon to say.

WIDOW QUIN (*shouting*): Watch him taking the gate. There's riding.

JIMMY (*cheering*): More power to the young lad!

MAHON: He's passing the third.

JIMMY: He'll lick them yet!

WIDOW QUIN: He'd lick them if he was running races with a score itself.

MAHON: Look at the mule he has, kicking the stars.

WIDOW QUIN: There was a lep! (*Catching hold of* MAHON *in her excitement*) He's fallen! He's mounted again! Faith, he's passing them all!

JIMMY: Look at him skelping her!

PHILLY: And the mountain girls hooshing him on!

JIMMY: It's the last turn! The post's cleared for them now!

MAHON: Look at the narrow place. He'll be into the bogs! (*With a yell*) Good rider! He's through it again!

JIMMY: He's neck and neck!

MAHON: Good boy to him! Flames, but he's in!

(*Great cheering, in which all join.*)

MAHON (*with hesitation*): What's that? They're raising him up. They're coming this way. (*With a roar of rage and astonishment*)

It's Christy! by the stars of God! I'd know his way of spitting and he astride the moon.

(*He jumps down and makes for the door, but* WIDOW QUIN *catches him and pulls him back.*)

WIDOW QUIN: Stay quiet, will you? That's not your son. (*To* JIMMY) Stop him, or you'll get a month for the abetting of manslaughter and be fined as well.

JIMMY: I'll hold him.

MAHON (*struggling*): Let me out! Let me out, the lot of you! till I have my vengeance on his head today.

WIDOW QUIN (*shaking him, vehemently*): That's not your son. That's a man is going to make a marriage with the daughter of this house, a place with fine trade, with a license, and with poteen too.

MAHON (*amazed*): That man marrying a decent and a moneyed girl! Is it mad yous are? Is it in a crazy-house for females that I'm landed now?

WIDOW QUIN: It's mad yourself is with the blow upon your head. That lad is the wonder of the Western World.

MAHON: I seen it's my son.

WIDOW QUIN: You seen that you're mad. (*Cheering outside*) Do you hear them cheering him in the zig-zags of the road? Aren't you after saying that your son's a fool, and how would they be cheering a true idiot born?

MAHON (*getting distressed*): It's maybe out of reason that that man's himself. (*Cheering again*) There's none surely will go cheering him. Oh, I'm raving with a madness that would fright the world! (*He sits down with his hand to his head*) There was one time I seen ten scarlet divils letting on they'd cork my spirit in a gallon can; and one time I seen rats as big as badgers sucking the life blood from the butt of my lug; but I never till this day confused that dribbling idiot with a likely man. I'm destroyed surely.

WIDOW QUIN: And who'd wonder when it's your brain-pan that is gaping now?

MAHON: Then the blight of the sacred drought upon myself and him, for I never went mad to this day, and I not three weeks with the Limerick girls drinking myself silly, and parlatic from the dusk to dawn. (*To* WIDOW QUIN, *suddenly*) Is my visage astray?

WIDOW QUIN: It is then. You're a sniggering maniac, a child could see.

MAHON (*getting up more cheerfully*): Then I'd best be going to the union beyond, and there'll be a welcome before me, I tell you (*with great pride*), and I a terrible and fearful case, the way that there I was one time, screeching in a straitened waistcoat, with seven doctors writing out my sayings in a printed book. Would you believe that?

WIDOW QUIN: If you're a wonder itself, you'd best be hasty, for them lads caught a maniac one time and pelted the poor creature till he ran out, raving and foaming, and was drowned in the sea.

MAHON (*with philosophy*): It's true mankind is the divil when your head's astray. Let me out now and I'll slip down the boreen, and not see them so.

WIDOW QUIN (*showing him out*): That's it. Run to the right, and not a one will see.

(*He runs off.*)

PHILLY (*wisely*): You're at some gaming, Widow Quin; but I'll walk after him and give him his dinner and a time to rest, and I'll see then if he's raving or as sane as you.

WIDOW QUIN (*annoyed*): If you go near that lad, let you be wary of your head, I'm saying. Didn't you hear him telling he was crazed at times?

PHILLY: I heard him telling a power; and I'm thinking we'll have right sport, before night will fall. (*He goes out.*)

JIMMY: Well, Philly's a conceited and foolish man. How could that madman have his senses and his brain-pan slit? I'll go after them and see him turn on Philly now.

(*He goes;* WIDOW QUIN *hides poteen behind counter. Then hubbub outside.*)

VOICES: There you are! Good jumper! Grand lepper! Darlint boy! He's the racer! Bear him on, will you!

(*Christy comes in, in* JOCKEY'S *dress, with* PEGEEN MIKE, SARA, *and other girls, and men.*)

PEGEEN (*to crowd*): Go on now and don't destroy him and he drenching with sweat. Go along, I'm saying, and have your tug-of-warring till he's dried his skin.

CROWD: Here's his prizes! A bagpipes! A fiddle was played by a poet in the years gone by! A flat and three-thorned blackthorn would lick the scholars out of Dublin town!

CHRISTY (*taking prizes from the men*): Thank you kindly, the lot of you. But you'd say it was little only I did this day if you'd seen me a while since striking my one single blow.

TOWN CRIER (*outside, ringing a bell*): Take notice, last event of this day! Tug-of-warring on the green below! Come on, the lot of you! Great achievement for all Mayo men!

PEGEEN: Go on, and leave him for to rest and dry. Go on, I tell you, for he'll do no more. (*She hustles crowd out;* WIDOW QUIN *following them.*)

MEN (*going*): Come on, then. Good luck for the while!

PEGEEN (*radiantly, wiping his face with her shawl*): Well, you're the lad, and you'll have great times from this out when you could win that wealth of prizes, and you sweating in the heat of noon!

CHRISTY (*looking at her with delight*): I'll have great times if I win the crowning prize I'm seeking now, and that's your promise that you'll wed me in a fortnight, when our banns is called.

PEGEEN (*backing away from him*): You've right daring to go ask me that, when all knows you'll be starting to some girl in your own townland, when your father's rotten in four months, or five.

CHRISTY (*indignantly*): Starting from you, is it? (*He follows her*) I will not, then, and when the airs is warming in four months, or five, it's then yourself and me should be pacing Neifin in the dews of night, the times sweet smells do be rising, and you'd see a little shiny new moon, maybe, sinking on the hills.

PEGEEN (*looking at him playfully*): And it's that kind of a poacher's love you'd make, Christy Mahon, on the sides of Neifin, when the night is down?

CHRISTY: It's little you'll think if my love's a poacher's, or an earl's itself, when you'll feel my two hands stretched around you, and I squeezing kisses on your puckered lips, till I'd feel a kind of pity for the Lord God in all ages sitting lonesome in his golden chair.

PEGEEN: That'll be right fun, Christy Mahon, and any girl would walk her heart out before she'd meet a young man was your like for eloquence, or talk, at all.

CHRISTY (*encouraged*): Let you wait, to hear me talking, till we're astray in Erris, when Good Friday's by, drinking a sup from a well, and making mighty kisses with our wetted mouths, or gaming in a gap or sunshine, with yourself stretched back unto your necklace, in the flowers of the earth.

PEGEEN (*in a lower voice, moved by his tone*): I'd be nice so, is it?

CHRISTY (*with rapture*): If the mitred bishops seen you that time, they'd be the like of the holy prophets, I'm thinking, do be straining the bars of Paradise to lay eyes on the Lady Helen of Troy, and she abroad, pacing back and forward, with a nosegay in her golden shawl.

PEGEEN (*with real tenderness*): And what is it I have, Christy Mahon, to make me fitting entertainment for the like of you, that has such poet's talking, and such bravery of heart?

CHRISTY (*in a low voice*): Isn't there the light of seven heavens in your heart alone, the way you'll be an angel's lamp to me from this out, and I abroad in the darkness, spearing salmons in the Owens, or the Carrowmore?

PEGEEN: If I was your wife, I'd be along with you those nights, Christy Mahon, the way you'd see I was a great hand at coaxing bailiffs, or coining funny nick-names for the stars of night.

CHRISTY: You, is it? Taking your death in the hailstones, or in the fogs of dawn.

PEGEEN: Yourself and me would shelter easy in a narrow bush, (*with a qualm of dread*) but we're only talking, maybe, for this would be a poor, thatched place to hold a fine lad is the like of you.

CHRISTY (*putting his arm around her*): If I wasn't a good Christian, it's on my naked knees I'd be saying my prayers and paters to every jackstraw you have roofing your head, and every stony pebble is paving the laneway to your door.

PEGEEN (*radiantly*): If that's the truth, I'll be burning candles from this out to the miracles of God that have brought you from the south today, and I, with my gowns bought ready, the way that I can wed you, and not wait at all.

CHRISTY: It's miracles, and that's the truth. Me there toiling a long while, and walking a long while, not knowing at all I was drawing all times nearer to this holy day.

PEGEEN: And myself, a girl, was tempted often to go sailing the seas till I'd marry a Jew-man, with ten kegs of gold, and I not knowing at all there was the like of you drawing nearer, like the stars of God.

CHRISTY: And to think I'm long years hearing women talking that talk, to all bloody fools, and this the first time I've heard the like of your voice talking sweetly for my own delight.

PEGEEN: And to think it's me is talking sweetly, Christy Mahon, and I the fright of seven townlands for my biting tongue. Well, the heart's a wonder; and, I'm thinking, there won't be our like in Mayo, for gallant lovers, from this hour, today. (*Drunken singing is heard outside*) There's my father coming from the wake, and when he's had his sleep we'll tell him, for he's peaceful then.

(*They separate.*)

MICHAEL (*singing outside*):

The jailor and the turnkey
They quickly ran us down,
And brought us back as prisoners
Once more to Cavan town.

(*He comes in supported by* SHAWN.)

There we lay bewailing
All in a prison bound. . . .

(*He sees* CHRISTY. *Goes and shakes him drunkenly by the hand, while* PEGEEN *and* SHAWN *talk on the left.*)

MICHAEL (*to* CHRISTY): The blessing of God and the holy angels on your head, young fellow. I hear tell you're after winning all in the

sports below; and wasn't it a shame I didn't bear you along with me to Kate Cassidy's wake, a fine, stout lad, the like of you, for you'd never see the match of it for flows of drink, the way when we sunk her bones at noonday in her narrow grave, there were five men, aye, and six men, stretched out retching speechless on the holy stones.

CHRISTY (*uneasily, watching* PEGEEN): Is that the truth?

MICHAEL: It is then, and aren't you a louty schemer to go burying your poor father unbeknownst when you'd a right to throw him on the crupper of a Kerry mule and drive him westwards, like holy Joseph in the days gone by, the way we could have given him a decent burial, and not have him rotting beyond, and not a Christian drinking a smart drop to the glory of his soul?

CHRISTY (*gruffly*): It's well enough he's lying, for the likes of him.

MICHAEL (*slapping him on the back*): Well, aren't you a hardened slayer? It'll be a poor thing for the household man where you go sniffing for a female wife; and (*pointing to* SHAWN) look beyond at that shy and decent Christian I have chosen for my daughter's hand, and I after getting the gilded dispensation this day for to wed them now.

CHRISTY: And you'll be wedding them this day, is it?

MICHAEL (*drawing himself up*): Aye. Are you thinking, if I'm drunk itself, I'd leave my daughter living single with a little frisky rascal is the like of you?

PEGEEN (*breaking away from* SHAWN): Is it the truth the dispensation's come?

MICHAEL (*triumphantly*): Father Reilly's after reading it in gallous Latin, and "It's come in the nick of time," says he; "so I'll wed them in a hurry, dreading that young gaffer who'd capsize the stars."

PEGEEN (*fiercely*): He's missed his nick of time, for it's that lad, Christy Mahon, that I'm wedding now.

MICHAEL (*loudly with horror*): You'd be making him a son to me, and he wet and crusted with his father's blood?

PEGEEN: Aye. Wouldn't it be a bitter thing for a girl to go marrying the like of Shaneen, and he a middling kind of a scarecrow, with no savagery or fine words in him at all?

MICHAEL (*gasping and sinking on a chair*): Oh, aren't you a heathen daughter to go shaking the fat of my heart, and I swamped and drownded with the weight of drink? Would you have them turning on me the way that I'd be roaring to the dawn of day with the wind upon my heart? Have you not a word to aid me, Shaneen? Are you not jealous at all?

SHAWN (*in great misery*): I'd be afeard to be jealous of a man did slay his da.

PEGEEN: Well, it'd be a poor thing to go marrying your like. I'm seeing there's a world of peril for an orphan girl, and isn't it a great blessing I didn't wed you, before himself came walking from the west or south?

SHAWN: It's a queer story you'd go picking a dirty tramp up from the highways of the world.

PEGEEN (*playfully*): And you think you're a likely beau to go straying along with, the shiny Sundays of the opening year, when it's sooner on a bullock's liver you'd put a poor girl thinking than on the lily or the rose?

SHAWN: And have you no mind of my weight of passion, and the holy dispensation, and the drift of heifers I am giving, and the golden ring?

PEGEEN: I'm thinking you're too fine for the like of me, Shawn Keogh of Killakeen, and let you go off till you'd find a radiant lady with droves of bullocks on the plains of Meath, and herself bedizened in the diamond jewelries of Pharaoh's ma. That'd be your match, Shaneen. So God save you now! (*She retreats behind* CHRISTY.)

SHAWN: Won't you hear me telling you . . . ?

CHRISTY (*with ferocity*): Take yourself from this, young fellow, or I'll maybe add a murder to my deeds today.

MICHAEL (*springing up with a shriek*): Murder is it? Is it mad yous are? Would you go making murder in this place, and it piled with poteen for our drink tonight? Go on to the foreshore if it's fighting you want, where the rising tide will wash all traces from the memory of man. (*Pushing* SHAWN *towards* CHRISTY.)

SHAWN (*shaking himself free, and getting behind* MICHAEL): I'll not fight him, Michael James. I'd liefer live a bachelor, simmering in passions to the end of time, than face a lepping savage the like of him has descended from the Lord knows where. Strike him yourself, Michael James, or you'll lose my drift of heifers and my blue bull from Sneem.

MICHAEL: Is it me fight him, when it's father-slaying he's bred to now? (*Pushing* SHAWN) Go on you fool and fight him now.

SHAWN (*coming forward a little*): Will I strike him with my hand?

MICHAEL: Take the loy is on your western side.

SHAWN: I'd be afeard of the gallows if I struck him with that.

CHRISTY (*taking up the loy*): Then I'll make you face the gallows or quit off from this.

(SHAWN *flies out of the door.*)

CHRISTY: Well, fine weather be after him, (*going to* MICHAEL, *coaxingly*) and I'm thinking you wouldn't wish to have that quaking blackguard in your house at all. Let you give us your blessing and hear her swear her faith to me, for I'm mounted on the springtide of the stars of luck, the way it'll be good for any to have me in the house.

PEGEEN (*at the other side of* MICHAEL): Bless us now, for I swear to God I'll wed him, and I'll not renege.

MICHAEL (*standing up in the centre, holding on to both of them*): It's the will of God, I'm thinking, that all should win an easy or a cruel end, and it's the will of God that all should rear up lengthy families for the nuture of the earth. What's a single man, I ask you, eating a bit in one house and drinking a sup in another, and he with no place of his own, like an old braying jackass strayed upon the rocks? (*To* CHRISTY) It's many would be in dread to bring your like into their house for to end them, maybe, with a sudden end; but I'm a decent man of Ireland, and I liefer face the grave untimely and I seeing a score of grandsons growing up little gallant swearers by the name of God, than go peopling my bedside with puny weeds the like of what you'd breed, I'm thinking, out of Shaneen Keogh. (*He joins their hands*) A daring fellow is the jewel of the world, and a man did split his father's middle with a single clout, should have

the bravery of ten, so may God and Mary and St. Patrick bless you, and increase you from this mortal day.

CHRISTY AND PEGEEN: Amen, O Lord!

(*Hubbub outside.*)

(OLD MAHON *rushes in, followed by all the crowd, and* WIDOW QUIN. *He makes a rush at* CHRISTY, *knocks him down, and begins to beat him.*)

PEGEEN (*dragging back his arm*): Stop that, will you? Who are you at all?

MAHON: His father, God forgive me!

PEGEEN (*drawing back*): Is it rose from the dead?

MAHON: Do you think I look so easy quenched with the tap of a loy? (*Beats* CHRISTY *again.*)

PEGEEN (*glaring at* CHRISTY): And it's lies you told, letting on you had him slitted, and you nothing at all.

CHRISTY (*catching* MAHON'S *stick*): He's not my father. He's a raving maniac would scare the world. (*Pointing to* WIDOW QUIN) Herself knows it's true.

CROWD: You're fooling Pegeen! The Widow Quin seen him this day, and you likely knew! You're a liar!

CHRISTY (*dumbfounded*): It's himself was a liar, lying stretched out with an open head on him, letting on he was dead.

MAHON: Weren't you off racing the hills before I got my breath with the start I had seeing you turn on me at all?

PEGEEN: And to think of the coaxing glory we had given him, and he after doing nothing but hitting a soft blow and chasing northward in a sweat of fear. Quit off from this.

CHRISTY (*piteously*): You've seen my doings this day, and let you save me from the old man; for why would you be in such a scorch of haste to spur me to destruction now?

PEGEEN: It's there your treachery is spurring me, till I'm hard set to think you're the one I'm after lacing in my heart-strings half-an-

hour gone by. (*To* MAHON) Take him on from this, for I think bad the world should see me raging for a Munster liar, and the fool of men.

MAHON: Rise up now to retribution, and come on with me.

CROWD (*jeeringly*): There's the playboy! There's the lad thought he'd rule the roost in Mayo. Slate him now, mister.

CHRISTY (*getting up in shy terror*): What is it drives you to torment me here, when I'd asked the thunders of the might of God to blast me if I ever did hurt to any saving only that one single blow?

MAHON (*loudly*): If you didn't, you're a poor good-for-nothing, and isn't it by the like of you the sins of the whole world are committed?

CHRISTY (*raising his hands*): In the name of the Almighty God. . . .

MAHON: Leave troubling the Lord God. Would you have him sending down droughts, and fevers, and the old hen and the cholera morbus?

CHRISTY (*to* WIDOW QUIN): Will you come between us and protect me now?

WIDOW QUIN: I've tried a lot, God help me, and my share is done.

CHRISTY (*looking round in desperation*): And I must go back into my torment is it, or run off like a vagabond straying through the Unions with the dusts of August making mud-stains in the gullet of my throat, or the winds of March blowing on me till I'd take an oath I felt them making whistles of my ribs within?

SARA: Ask Pegeen to aid you. Her like does often change.

CHRISTY: I will not then, for there's torment in the splendour of her like, and she a girl any moon of midnight would take pride to meet, facing southwards on the heaths of Keel. But what did I want crawling forward to scorch my understanding at her flaming brow?

PEGEEN (*to* MAHON, *vehemently, fearing she will break into tears*): Take him on from this or I'll set the young lads to destroy him here.

MAHON (*going to him, shaking his stick*): Come on now if you wouldn't have the company to see you skelped.

PEGEEN (*half laughing, through her tears*): That's it, now the world will see him pandied, and he an ugly liar was playing off the hero, and the fright of men.

CHRISTY (*to* MAHON, *very sharply*): Leave me go!

CROWD: That's it. Now, Christy. If them two set fighting, it will lick the world.

MAHON (*making a grab at Christy*): Come here to me.

CHRISTY (*more threateningly*): Leave me go, I'm saying.

MAHON: I will maybe, when your legs is limping, and your back is blue.

CROWD: Keep it up, the two of you. I'll back the old man. Now the playboy.

CHRISTY (*in low and intense voice*): Shut your yelling, for if you're after making a mighty man of me this day by the power of a lie, you're setting me now to think if it's a poor thing to be lonesome, it's worse maybe to go mixing with the fools of earth.

(MAHON *makes a movement towards him.*)

CHRISTY (*almost shouting*): Keep off . . . lest I do show a blow unto the lot of you would set the guardian angels winking in the clouds above. (*He swings round with a sudden rapid movement and picks up a loy.*)

CROWD (*half frightened, half amused*): He's going mad! Mind yourselves! Run from the idiot!

CHRISTY: If I am an idiot, I'm after hearing my voice this day saying words would raise the topknot on a poet in a merchant's town. I've won your racing, your lepping, and . . .

MAHON: Shut your gullet and come on with me.

CHRISTY: I'm going, but I'll stretch you first.

(*He runs at old* MAHON *with the loy, chases him out of the door, followed by crowd and* WIDOW QUIN. *There is a great noise outside, then a yell, and dead silence for a moment.* CHRISTY *comes in, half dazed, and goes to fire.*)

WIDOW QUIN (*coming in, hurriedly, and going to him*): They're turning again you. Come on, or you'll be hanged, indeed.

CHRISTY: I'm thinking, from this out, Pegeen'll be giving me praises the same as in the hours gone by.

WIDOW QUIN (*impatiently*): Come by the back-door. I'd think bad to have you stifled on the gallows tree.

CHRISTY (*indignantly*): I will not, then. What good'd be my lifetime, if I left Pegeen?

WIDOW QUIN: Come on, and you'll be no worse than you were last night; and you with a double murder this time to be telling to the girls.

CHRISTY: I'll not leave Pegeen Mike.

WIDOW QUIN (*impatiently*): Isn't there the match of her in every parish public, from Binghamstown unto the plain of Meath? Come on, I tell you, and I'll find you finer sweethearts at each waning moon.

CHRISTY: It's Pegeen I'm seeking only, and what'd I care if you brought me a drift of chosen females, standing in their shifts itself, maybe, from this place to the Eastern World?

SARA (*runs in, pulling off one of her petticoats*): They're going to hang him. (*Holding out petticoat and shawl*) Fit these upon him, and let him run off to the east.

WIDOW QUIN: He's raving now; but we'll fit them on him, and I'll take him, in the ferry, to the Achill boat.

CHRISTY (*struggling feebly*): Leave me go, will you? when I'm thinking of my luck today, for she will wed me surely, and I a proven hero in the end of all.

(*They try to fasten petticoat round him.*)

WIDOW QUIN: Take his left hand, and we'll pull him now. Come on, young fellow.

CHRISTY (*suddenly starting up*): You'll be taking me from her? You're jealous, is it, of her wedding me? Go on from this. (*He snatches up a stool, and threatens them with it.*)

WIDOW QUIN (*going*): It's in the mad-house they should put him, not in jail, at all. We'll go by the back-door, to call the doctor, and we'll save him so.

(*She goes out, with* SARA, *through inner room. Men crowd in the doorway.* CHRISTY *sits down again by the fire.*)

MICHAEL (*in a terrified whisper*): Is the old lad killed surely?

PHILLY: I'm after feeling the last gasps quitting his heart.

(*They peer in at* CHRISTY.)

MICHAEL (*with a rope*): Look at the way he is. Twist a hangman's knot on it, and slip it over his head, while he's not minding at all.

PHILLY: Let you take it, Shaneen. You're the soberest of all that's here.

SHAWN: Is it me to go near him, and he the wickedest and worst with me? Let you take it, Pegeen Mike.

PEGEEN: Come on, so.

(*She goes forward with the others, and they drop the double hitch over his head.*)

CHRISTY: What ails you?

SHAWN (*triumphantly, as they pull the rope tight on his arms*): Come on to the peelers, till they stretch you now.

CHRISTY: Me!

MICHAEL: If we took pity on you, the Lord God would, maybe, bring us ruin from the law today, so you'd best come easy, for hanging is an easy and a speedy end.

CHRISTY: I'll not stir. (*To* PEGEEN) And what is it you'll say to me, and I after doing it this time in the face of all?

PEGEEN: I'll say, a strange man is a marvel, with his mighty talk; but what's a squabble in your back-yard, and the blow of a loy, have taught me that there's a great gap between a gallous story and a dirty deed. (*To* MEN) Take him on from this, or the lot of us will be likely put on trial for his deed today.

CHRISTY (*with horror in his voice*): And it's yourself will send me off, to have a horny-fingered hangman hitching his bloody slip-knots at the butt of my ear.

MEN (*pulling rope*): Come on, will you?

(*He is pulled down on the floor.*)

CHRISTY (*twisting his legs round the table*): Cut the rope, Pegeen, and I'll quit the lot of you, and live from this out, like the madmen of Keel, eating muck and green weeds, on the faces of the cliffs.

PEGEEN: And leave us to hang, is it, for a saucy liar, the like of you? (*To* MEN) Take him on, out from this.

SHAWN: Pull a twist on his neck, and squeeze him so.

PHILLY: Twist yourself. Sure he cannot hurt you, if you keep your distance from his teeth alone.

SHAWN: I'm afeard of him. (*To* PEGEEN) Lift a lighted sod, will you, and scorch his leg.

PEGEEN (*blowing the fire, with a bellows*): Leave go now, young fellow, or I'll scorch your shins.

CHRISTY: You're blowing for to torture me. (*His voice rising and growing stronger*) That's your kind, is it? Then let the lot of you be wary, for, if I've to face the gallows, I'll have a gay march down, I tell you, and shed the blood of some of you before I die.

SHAWN (*in terror*): Keep a good hold, Philly. Be wary, for the love of God. For I'm thinking he would liefest wreak his pains on me.

CHRISTY (*almost gaily*): If I do lay my hands on you, it's the way you'll be at the fall of night, hanging as a scarecrow for the fowls of hell. Ah, you'll have a gallous jaunt I'm saying, coaching out through Limbo with my father's ghost.

SHAWN (*to* PEGEEN): Make haste, will you? Oh, isn't he a holy terror, and isn't it true for Father Reilly, that all drink's a curse that has the lot of you so shaky and uncertain now?

CHRISTY: If I can wring a neck among you, I'll have a royal judgment looking on the trembling jury in the courts of law. And won't there be crying out in Mayo the day I'm stretched upon the rope

with ladies in their silks and satins snivelling in their lacy kerchiefs, and they rhyming songs and ballads on the terror of my fate? (*He squirms round on the floor and bites* SHAWN'S *leg.*)

SHAWN (*shrieking*): My leg's bit on me. He's the like of a mad dog, I'm thinking, the way that I will surely die.

CHRISTY (*delighted with himself*): You will then, the way you can shake out hell's flags of welcome for my coming in two weeks or three, for I'm thinking Satan hasn't many have killed their da in Kerry, and in Mayo too.

(OLD MAHON *comes in behind on all fours and looks on unnoticed.*)

MEN (*to* PEGEEN): Bring the sod, will you?

PEGEEN (*coming over*): God help him so. (*Burns his leg.*)

CHRISTY (*kicking and screaming*): O, glory be to God!

(*He kicks loose from the table, and they all drag him towards the door.*)

JIMMY (*seeing old* MAHON): Will you look what's come in?

(*They all drop* CHRISTY *and run left.*)

CHRISTY (*scrambling on his knees face to face with old* MAHON): Are you coming to be killed a third time, or what ails you now?

MAHON: For what is it they have you tied?

CHRISTY: They're taking me to the peelers to have me hanged for slaying you.

MICHAEL (*apologetically*): It is the will of God that all should guard their little cabins from the treachery of law, and what would my daughter be doing if I was ruined or was hanged itself?

MAHON (*grimly, loosening* CHRISTY): It's little I care if you put a bag on her neck, and went picking cockles till the hour of death; but my son and myself will be going our own way, and we'll have great times from this out telling stories of the villany of Mayo, and the fools is here. (*To* CHRISTY. *who is freed*) Come on now.

CHRISTY: Go with you, is it? I will then, like a gallant captain with his heathen slave. Go on now and I'll see you from this day stewing

my oatmeal and washing my spuds, for I'm master of all fights from now. (*Pushing* MAHON) Go on, I'm saying.

MAHON: Is it me?

CHRISTY: Not a word out of you. Go on from this.

MAHON (*walking out and looking back at* CHRISTY *over his shoulder*): Glory be to God! (*With a broad smile*) I am crazy again! (*Goes.*)

CHRISTY: Ten thousand blessings upon all that's here, for you've turned me a likely gaffer in the end of all, the way I'll go romancing through a romping lifetime from this hour to the dawning of the judgment day. (*He goes out.*)

MICHAEL: By the will of God, we'll have peace now for our drinks. Will you draw the porter, Pegeen?

SHAWN (*going up to her*): It's a miracle Father Reilly can wed us in the end of all, and we'll have none to trouble us when his vicious bite is healed.

PEGEEN (*hitting him a box on the ear*): Quit my sight. (*Putting her shawl over her head and breaking out into wild lamentations*) Oh my grief, I've lost him surely. I've lost the only Playboy of the Western World.

(*The Curtain Falls.*)

To us today the shock and outrage that greeted the first production of *The Playboy of the Western World* in 1907 seem almost incredible. Aside from any considerations of morality or propriety, the success of its satire on the Irish caused Irish audiences to rebel against it until the initial shock wore off. Reminiscing on the original performance at the time of a 1946 Broadway revival, the New York *Times* said:

At the first performance in Dublin in 1907 the reaction was about what you would have got if "Tobacco Road" had opened, say, in Atlanta. After the second act Synge telegraphed Yeats, who was lecturing in Edinburgh, "Play great success." But about one in the morning Yeats was awakened by a second wire, "Audience broke up in disorder at the word shift." A shift, let it be explained, is a lady's undergarment. Such was the delicacy of Dublin A.D. 1907 that the press shunned the offending noun.

The play was denounced as an unspeakable slur on Ireland's womanhood. No Irish girl would ever sleep under the same roof with a young man without a chaperon, nor would she admire a murderer. And to have reference to shifts uttered from the stage was more than decent ears could hear.

Its reception in New York City was no less sensational. The article goes on to comment on the New York première:

The story next morning rated the front page of *The New York Times*. "The curtain rose," the report said, "and that was the signal for a stir that swept through the theatre like the rustle of leaves foretelling a storm." Soon came the moment when Christy insults Pegeen Mike and she rushes for a flatiron [broom]. "Don't strike me," he cried. "I killed my [poor] father . . . for doing the like of that." Instantly from all over the theatre came shouts of "Shame! Shame!"

"A potato swept through the air from the gallery," *The Times* story continues. "Then came a shower of vegetables that rattled against the scenery and made the actors duck their heads and fly behind the stage setting for shelter." When they tried to go on, stench bombs began to hit the stage. At about the time the asafetida fumes were choking actors and audience alike, J. M. Kerrigan recalls, Lady Gregory stuck her head through the prop fireplace. As Napoleon might have exhorted his men at Waterloo, she called to her beleaguered troupe, "Reserve yourselves. We are going to do the whole thing over." When comparative quiet had been restored the curtain went up again, and for what must be the only time in the history of the New York stage an act of a play was repeated in full.[1]

The basis of this folk-comedy which did not amuse the Irish is an anecdote Synge heard about a Connaught man who in a rage killed his father with a loy. The murderer fled to the Aran Islands, where the natives hid him in a hole for three weeks and then shipped him off to America. In *The Aran Islands* Synge evaluates this Irish tolerance of the underdog, moving almost imperceptibly from the sociologist's detached objectivity to the dramatist's tongue-in-cheek satire as the provincial Irish proceed inno cently to undercut themselves:

[1] New York *Times*, October 20, 1946, II, 3.

> This impulse to protect the criminal is universal in the west. It seems partly due to the association between justice and the hated English jurisdiction, but more directly to the primitive feeling of these people, who are never criminals yet always capable of crime, that a man will not do wrong unless he is under the influence of a passion which is as irresponsible as a storm on the sea. If a man has killed his father, and is already sick and broken with remorse, they can see no reason why he should be dragged away and killed by the law.
>
> Such a man, they say, will be quiet all the rest of his life, and if you suggest that punishment is needed as an example, they ask "Would any one kill his father if he was able to help it?"[2]

Synge's central problem in *The Playboy* is to dramatize satirically this naive ethical confusion. In *Arms and the Man* Shaw handles a somewhat similar problem by embodying clashing points of view in different characters and deriving his comic values through the triumph of his realists. Synge, however, creates some of his comedy by a constant shift in tone from high comedy to farce to melodrama, and by bringing about frequent changes in the audience's attitude toward the characters and the characters' attitudes toward one another.

In the opening scene of Act One our sympathies lie with the impatient but essentially good-natured Pegeen when she teases Shawn or treats him scornfully. Her sarcastic "Well, you're a daring fellow" (p. 267) echoes the audience's sentiments. Shawn's refusal to protect his fiancée by spending the night in her house does not evoke our sympathy because he is presented as a coward and a prude. Later, when he expresses what would seem to be a rational reaction by saying that it is unwise to have a murderer in the house with Pegeen, he is looked upon with the utmost contempt by the others. Synge further undermines Shawn's manliness by making him ridiculously terrified when he is driven from the house by Michael's teasing and bullying. An unexpected comic twist is given by his immediate reappearance, which is even more farcical than his frantic departure.

Shawn's fear of Christy seems groundless when we first see the "slight young man . . . very tired and frightened and dirty" (p. 270), for although he appears mysterious to the other characters, he is seen by the audience to be bashful and retiring. In fact, he seems very similar to Shawn at first. When his shy, indirect answers to their questions finally provoke Pegeen to threaten him with the broom and he blurts out that he killed his father, the awed reaction can be summed up in the words of one of the men — an ironic

[2] John M. Synge, *The Aran Islands,* in *Complete Works* (New York, 1935), p. 370.

repetition of the words Pegeen has used scornfully of Shawn previously: "There's a daring fellow" (p. 273). Gradually Christy gains confidence as the others extol his deed. Christy's pride and self-confidence increase as Pegeen compliments him and displays a lively interest in him; she is unable to believe that he was really a poor, simple fellow, toiling patiently until the day he rose up against his tyrannical father. Her wild imagination has so convinced her that he is "a fine, handsome young fellow with a noble brow" (p. 276) that she interprets his timidity as humility. The Widow Quin's eagerness to get possession of him only increases Christy's wonder, until by the end of Act One he is both pleased and dumbfounded by the turn of events: "— two fine women fighting for the likes of me — till I'm thinking this night wasn't I a foolish fellow not to kill my father in the years gone by" (p. 282).

Not only is Synge ridiculing the morality and attitudes of Christy's admirers but he is also poking fun at Christy as the boy relates his experience. Christy recoils when Jimmy hints that he might be capable of molesting women, argues that he could not have shot his father because he had no license to carry a gun, and is scandalized at being thought of as a "slaughter-boy" who would use a knife. Yet he is offended when Pegeen suggests that he has committed no crime at all. Moreover, Synge manages to deflate all of Christy's boastfulness with one deft dramatic touch. Just as Christy says to Pegeen, "I a seemly fellow with great strength in me and bravery of . . ." (p. 279), a knock at the door gives him the lie, for he immediately clings to her in terror.

The second act is devoted primarily to the growth of Christy's self-esteem. His soliloquy reveals the great change that has been wrought overnight in his opinion of himself, though he is still vain, lazy, and excessively shy of "strange girls." The troop of girls who come bearing gifts convinces him that everyone in this place considers him a hero. Flattered beyond measure, he expands and embellishes his tale with childlike enthusiasm until Pegeen breaks up his audience. Annoyed, she treats him imperiously as her pot-boy until, realizing that she may drive him from her house, she quickly changes her tack and receives his compliments in an embarrassed, but pleased manner. Later, when Shawn and the Widow Quin offer him inducements to leave, Christy assumes an arrogant air. Yet how does Synge quickly cut him down to his former self? Where else does Synge use this device? Does it remind you of a characteristic trick of Shaw's in *Arms and the Man*?

The shift of tone in Act Three should also be carefully traced from broad comedy to cheerful excitement and confusion when

Christy comes riding in on a wave of triumph. When he makes enraptured love to Pegeen, a contrasting mood of quiet tenderness is established, only to be abruptly shattered by the drunken arrival of the talkative Michael. Just as all the conflicts are apparently resolved, Mahon's appearance introduces further complications. When Pegeen finds that Christy's tale of prowess is all a wild lie, she furiously turns on him. With lightning change the crowd too repudiates him, and he discovers that he must fight alone. As long as Christy's deeds were surrounded by a vague romantic atmosphere far removed from that of everyday events, the onlookers were able to glorify his conduct; but when they see what such actions really are close at hand, they reverse their stand completely. Pegeen expresses this change in attitude on page 319: "I'll say, a strange man is a marvel, with his mighty talk; but what's a squabble in your back-yard, and the blow of a loy, have taught me that there's a great gap between a gallous story and a dirty deed."

Pegeen's curtain speech reveals Synge's final playfully satiric attack on her. After the departure of Mahon and Christy she realizes that she has lost the man she would have loved as her own. Too late she comes to her senses: "Oh my grief, I've lost him surely. I've lost the only Playboy of the Western World" (p. 322). Having known the mighty Christy, she cannot bear the meek Shawn, yet she has rejected him and is now left alone. It is ironic that she has spurned Christy because he has deceived her with his lie, when the lie itself had really produced the man she loves.

It should be clear that *The Playboy* is far more than simply a satire on the Irish character. The play is essentially a comic study of a young man's coming to self-awareness. Christy's surprised question in the face of Pegeen's lavish compliments, "Is it me?" (p. 276) begins this development. The comic irony with which Synge surrounds the maturing of his hero is nicely pointed up in Act Two when Pegeen calls Christy "a fine lad with the great savagery to destroy your da." Small wonder that Christy responds, "It's little I'm understanding myself . . ." (p. 291). By the end of the play, however, Christy sees that an understanding of oneself is not to be found in the praise and admiration of others, but through one's own strength of character and personal achievements. But Synge does not dramatize his theme so solemnly. If an ill-founded dependence upon the hero-worship of others brings about Christy's disillusionment, it is, paradoxically, this very praise — for a parricide, no less — that has helped Christy gain self-confidence and transform into reality the illusions about himself which his new acquaintances have inspired.

Thus Christy's attempt to re-murder his father brings the play to a climax, for his decision reveals that his character has been permanently changed. In the dramatic struggle between father and son which has superseded the comedy at this point, Christy, forced to decide between yielding to his father's imperious commands or heeding the tormenting jeers of the crowd, clearly defines the issue when he says, "Shut your yelling, for . . . you're after making a mighty man of me this day by the power of a lie . . ." (p. 317). The father's last, unobtrusive entrance sets the stage for the final dramatic assertion of "the power of a lie." When father and son depart together, theirs is a completely new relationship (pp. 321-322):

> CHRISTY: Go with you, is it? I will then, like a gallant captain with his heathen slave . . . for I'm master of all fights from now.

Convinced of his own prowess and now a wiser man, Christy emerges as the victor, while his amazed but pleased father realizes that now he has a son that he can be proud of. Mahon's incredulous repetition of Christy's earlier question "Is it me?" brings the play full circle at last.

QUESTIONS

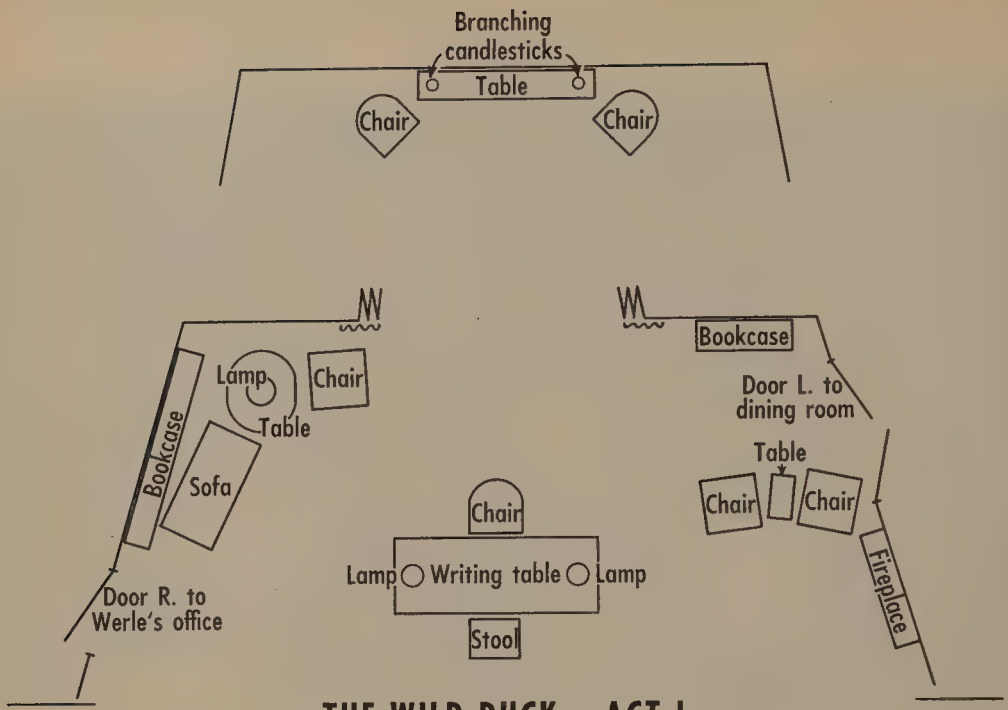
1. How does Synge satirize the moral standards of Christy, Michael, and Shawn in Act One?
2. What is the audience's attitude toward Christy in Act One? How is it established? By the end of the play what is our attitude toward him?
3. In what way do Kate Cassidy's wake and funeral contribute to the tone of the play? To what extent are they a satire on Irish customs?
4. Which one of the characters does not turn against Christy? Why not?
5. How does the discussion between Jimmy and Philly, on which the curtain rises in Act Three, foreshadow a new attitude toward Christy? When does this attitude reappear?
6. Trace the shifts in Pegeen's attitude toward Christy in Act Three.
7. What is the tone of the episode in Act Three in which the Widow Quin and Sara try to save Christy?
8. Do the Widow Quin's changing alliances indicate an altering of her character? How can they be accounted for?
9. Describe the pace of Act Three from the time of Mahon's first entrance to the end. What factors contribute to establishing this pace?
10. Trace the use of Shawn as a foil to Christy throughout the play. What dramatic effects does Synge achieve through playing them off against one another?
11. At the end of the play Mahon leaves as a changed man. In what way

has he changed? Is his change in attitude toward Christy convincing? Has Synge planted any evidence earlier that Mahon's character has not really been drastically altered, as his son's has?

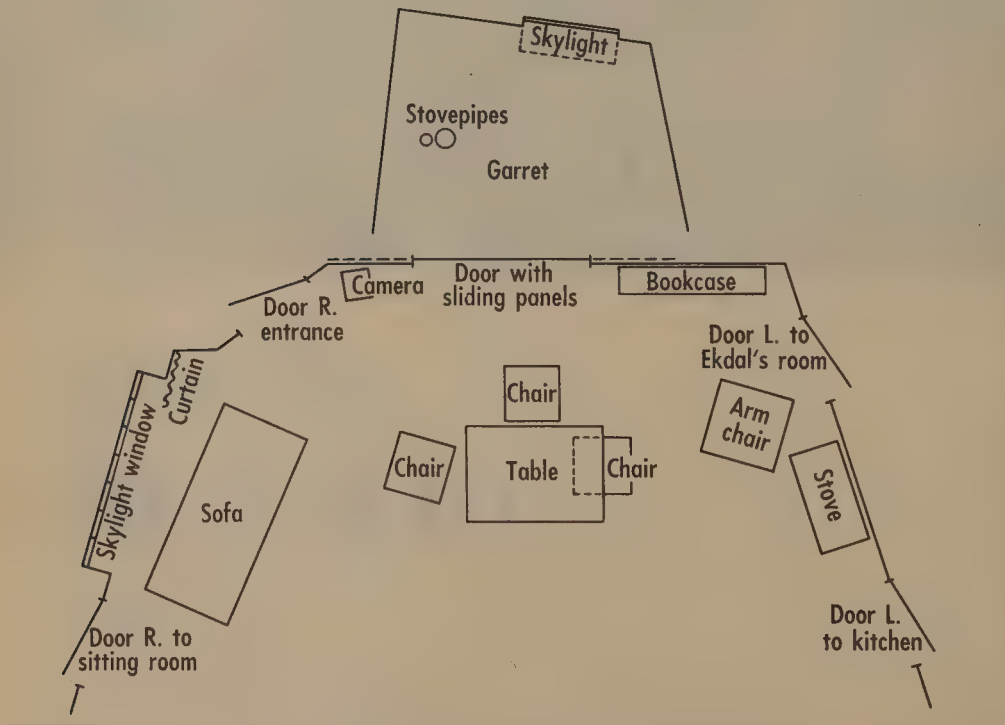
12. One of the primary principles of comedy in *The Playboy of the Western World* is contradiction or paradox. Evaluate the ironic effects achieved in as many different kinds of contradictions as you can find.

HENRIK IBSEN

THE WILD DUCK



THE WILD DUCK • ACT I



THE WILD DUCK • ACTS II AND III

HENRIK IBSEN

SEVEN YEARS AFTER Henrik Ibsen's birth on March 20, 1828, in Skein, a small Norwegian coastal town, his family lost their money and their social position. On the wretched farm to which they moved there were no outlets for the literary and artistic talents which the boy possessed. At sixteen he left home and became an apothecary's apprentice in the seaport village of Grimstad; during these unhappy, lonely years of adolescence and young manhood he became interested in the revolutionary causes sweeping Europe in 1848. He went to Christiania (now Oslo) in 1850 to enter the university as a medical student, but the publication of his first play, *Catalina,* a blank-verse tragedy, made him decide in favor of a theatrical career.

For the next two years Ibsen wrote plays, and virtually starved doing so, until he was appointed dramatist for the Norwegian Theater at Bergen, where he later became stage manager. After six years of hard work writing, translating, and directing plays there, he was appointed "artistic director" of the Norwegian Theater of Christiania, a post he held until the theater failed in 1862. Several years of hardship and poverty followed until he moved to Rome and, later, to Dresden, where during the next quarter of a century he wrote his most famous plays. In 1891 he returned to Norway, where the earlier hostility and bitterness aroused by his dramas had turned to acclaim. For a decade he enjoyed extravagant but controversial success in Europe and America, but a stroke made his last days ones of lonely suffering. He died in Christiania in 1906 and was given a ceremonial public funeral attended by the king of Norway.

Ibsen is a historic figure in modern dramatic literature, for he was the first to create the modern problem play, set in realistic contemporary surroundings. He introduced into the drama of the late nineteenth century a serious intent where previously there had been only an effort to entertain the middle class or to flatter their respectable Victorian social and economic attitudes. Ibsen repudiated the dramatic assumptions of his day; he violently disturbed

his audiences by focusing attention on crises in the moral and social life of their age. Although he was always a painstaking craftsman, he also rejected the conventions of the "well-made" play. Instead of making use of the traditional soliloquies and asides, for example, he erected an imaginary fourth wall for his box-like stage so that a drama could work itself out independently, separated from an audience whose presence is never recognized until the final curtain calls break the illusion.

In the early part of Ibsen's career he made no revolutionary innovations in dramatic technique. His first plays were experimental efforts to dignify Norwegian folklore and history, and here his bent was toward poetic and satiric dramas. It is Ibsen's so-called second period that produced the plays for which he is best known. From *Pillars of Society* (1877) to *Hedda Gabler* (1890) Ibsen dealt with many of the social and ethical problems that existed in a complacent world, showing to Shaw and his contemporaries that the theater could not only entertain but enlighten and that it could be the artistic instrumentality for presenting serious, even revolutionary, views about the freedom and dignity of the individual in conflict with the pressures of modern society. His attack on the conventional treatment of women in *A Doll's House* (1879) made the play a milestone in dramatic history, marking the beginning of the modern theater. In Ibsen's last four plays, however, he moved away from the social toward the use of the symbolic, the psychological, and the introspective as experimental modes of creating human beings and human destinies — always the goal of Ibsen's dramatic impulses.

PRINCIPAL PLAYS

Catalina (1850)
Norma (1851)
Love's Comedy (1862)
Brand (1866)
Peer Gynt (1867)
The League of Youth (1869)
Emperor and Galilean (1873)
Pillars of Society (1877)
A Doll's House (1879)
Ghosts (1881)
An Enemy of the People (1882)
The Wild Duck (1884)
Rosmersholm (1886)
Lady from the Sea (1888)
Hedda Gabler (1890)
The Master Builder (1892)
Little Eyolf (1894)
John Gabriel Borkman (1896)
When We Dead Awaken (1899)

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CHARACTERS

WERLE, *a merchant, manufacturer, etc.*
GREGERS WERLE, *his son.*
OLD EKDAL.
HIALMAR EKDAL, *his son, a photographer.*
GINA EKDAL, *Hialmar's wife.*
HEDVIG, *their daughter, a girl of fourteen.*
MRS. SÖRBY, *Werle's housekeeper.*
RELLING, *a doctor.*
MOLVIK, *student of theology.*
GRÅBERG, *Werle's bookkeeper.*
PETTERSEN, *Werle's servant.*
JENSEN, *a hired waiter.*
A FLABBY GENTLEMAN.
A THIN-HAIRED GENTLEMAN.
A SHORT-SIGHTED GENTLEMAN.
SIX OTHER GENTLEMEN, *guests at Werle's dinner-party.*
SEVERAL HIRED WAITERS.

The first act passes in WERLE'S *house, the remaining acts at* HIALMAR EKDAL'S.

Pronunciation of Names: GREGERS WERLE = Grayghers Verlë; HIALMAR EKDAL = Yalmar Aykdal; GINA = Cheena; GRÅBERG = Groberg; JENSEN = Yensen.

Translated by

FRANCES E. ARCHER

The Wild Duck was published on November 11, 1884, and produced in many leading theaters in Norway in January, 1885.

Act One

AT WERLE'S *house. A richly and comfortably furnished study; bookcases and upholstered furniture; a writing-table, with papers and documents, in the centre of the room; lighted lamps with green shades, giving a subdued light. At the back, open folding-doors with curtains drawn back. Within is seen a large and handsome room, brilliantly lighted with lamps and branching candlesticks. In front, on the right (in the study), a small baize door leads into* WERLE'S *office. On the left, in front, a fireplace with a glowing coal fire, and farther back a double door leading into the dining-room.*

WERLE'S *servant,* PETTERSEN, *in livery, and* JENSEN, *the hired waiter, in black, are putting the study in order. In the large room, two or three other hired waiters are moving about, arranging things and lighting more candles. From the dining-room, the hum of conversation and laughter of many voices are heard; a glass is tapped with a knife; silence follows, and a toast is proposed; shouts of "Bravo!" and then again a buzz of conversation.*

PETTERSEN (*lights a lamp on the chimney-place and places a shade over it*): Hark to them, Jensen! now the old man's on his legs holding a long palaver about Mrs. Sörby.

JENSEN (*pushing forward an armchair*): Is it true, what folks say, that they're—very good friends, eh?

PETTERSEN: Lord knows.

JENSEN: I've heard tell as he's been a lively customer in his day.

PETTERSEN: May be.

JENSEN: And he's giving this spread in honour of his son, they say.

PETTERSEN: Yes. His son came home yesterday.

JENSEN: This is the first time I ever heard as Mr. Werle had a son

PETTERSEN: Oh, yes, he has a son, right enough. But he's a fixture, as you might say, up at the Höidal works. He's never once come to town all the years I've been in service here.

A WAITER (*in the doorway of the other room*): Pettersen, here's an old fellow wanting . . .

PETTERSEN (*mutters*): The devil—who's this now?

(OLD EKDAL *appears from the right, in the inner room. He is dressed in a threadbare overcoat with a high collar; he wears woollen mittens and carries in his hand a stick and a fur cap. Under his arm, a brown paper parcel. Dirty red-brown wig and small grey moustache.*)

PETTERSEN (*goes towards him*): Good Lord—what do you want here?

EKDAL (*in the doorway*): Must get into the office, Pettersen.

PETTERSEN: The office was closed an hour ago, and . . .

EKDAL: So they told me at the front door. But Gråberg's in there still. Let me slip in this way, Pettersen; there's a good fellow. (*Points towards the baize door*) It's not the first time I've come this way.

PETTERSEN: Well, you may pass. (*Opens the door*) But mind you go out again the proper way, for we've got company.

EKDAL: I know, I know—h'm! Thanks, Pettersen, good old friend! Thanks! (*Mutters softly*) Ass!

(*He goes into the office;* PETTERSEN *shuts the door after him.*)

JENSEN: Is he one of the office people?

PETTERSEN: No, he's only an outside hand that does odd jobs of copying. But he's been a tip-topper in his day, has old Ekdal.

JENSEN: You can see he's been through a lot.

PETTERSEN: Yes; he was an army officer, you know.

JENSEN: You don't say so?

PETTERSEN: No mistake about it. But then he went into the timber trade or something of the sort. They say he once played Mr. Werle a very nasty trick. They were partners in the Höidal works at the

time. Oh, I know old Ekdal well, I do. Many a nip of bitters and bottle of ale we two have drunk at Madam Eriksen's.

JENSEN: He don't look as if he'd much to stand treat with.

PETTERSEN: Why, bless you, Jensen, it's me that stands treat. I always think there's no harm in being a bit civil to folks that have seen better days.

JENSEN: Did he go bankrupt, then?

PETTERSEN: Worse than that. He went to prison.

JENSEN: To prison!

PETTERSEN: Or perhaps it was the Penitentiary. (*Listens*) Sh! They're leaving the table.

(*The dining-room door is thrown open from within by a couple of waiters.* MRS. SÖRBY *comes out conversing with two gentlemen. Gradually the whole company follows, amongst them* WERLE. *Last come* HIALMAR EKDAL *and* GREGERS WERLE.)

MRS. SÖRBY (*in passing, to the servant*): Tell them to serve the coffee in the music-room, Pettersen.

PETTERSEN: Very well, Madam.

(*She goes with the two gentlemen into the inner room and thence out to the right.* PETTERSEN *and* JENSEN *go out the same way.*)

A FLABBY GENTLEMAN (*to a* THIN-HAIRED GENTLEMAN): Whew! What a dinner!—It was no joke to do it justice!

THE THIN-HAIRED GENTLEMAN: Oh, with a little good-will one can get through a lot in three hours.

THE FLABBY GENTLEMAN: Yes, but afterwards, afterwards, my dear Chamberlain!

A THIRD GENTLEMAN: I hear the coffee and maraschino are to be served in the music-room.

THE FLABBY GENTLEMAN: Bravo! Then perhaps Mrs. Sörby will play us something.

THE THIN-HAIRED GENTLEMAN (*in a low voice*): I hope Mrs. Sörby mayn't play us a tune we don't like, one of these days!

THE FLABBY GENTLEMAN: Oh, no, not she! Bertha will never turn against her old friends.

(*They laugh and pass into the inner room.*)

WERLE (*in a low voice, dejectedly*): I don't think anybody noticed it, Gregers.

GREGERS (*looks at him*): Noticed what?

WERLE: Did you not notice it either?

GREGERS: What do you mean?

WERLE: We were thirteen at table.

GREGERS: Indeed? Were there thirteen of us?

WERLE (*glances towards* HIALMAR EKDAL): Our usual party is twelve. (*To the others*) This way, gentlemen!

(WERLE *and the others, all except* HIALMAR *and* GREGERS, *go out by the back, to the right.*)

HIALMAR (*who has overheard the conversation*): You ought not to have invited me, Gregers.

GREGERS: What! Not ask my best and only friend to a party supposed to be in my honour . . . ?

HIALMAR: But I don't think your father likes it. You see I am quite outside his circle.

GREGERS: So I hear. But I wanted to see you and have a talk with you, and I certainly shan't be staying long.—Ah, we two old schoolfellows have drifted far apart from each other. It must be sixteen or seventeen years since we met.

HIALMAR: Is it so long?

GREGERS: It is indeed. Well, how goes it with you? You look well. You have put on flesh and grown almost stout.

HIALMAR: Well, "stout" is scarcely the word; but I daresay I look a little more of a man than I used to.

GREGERS: Yes, you do; your outer man is in first-rate condition.

HIALMAR (*in a tone of gloom*): Ah, but the inner man! That is a very different matter, I can tell you! Of course you know of the terrible catastrophe that has befallen me and mine since last we met.

GREGERS (*more softly*): How are things going with your father now?

HIALMAR: Don't let us talk of it, old fellow. Of course my poor unhappy father lives with me. He hasn't another soul in the world to care for him. But you can understand that this is a miserable subject for me.—Tell me, rather, how you have been getting on up at the works.

GREGERS: I have had a delightfully lonely time of it—plenty of leisure to think and think about things. Come over here; we may as well make ourselves comfortable.

(*He seats himself in an armchair by the fire and draws* HIALMAR *down into another alongside of it.*)

HIALMAR (*sentimentally*): After all, Gregers, I thank you for inviting me to your father's table; for I take it as a sign that you have got over your feeling against me.

GREGERS (*surprised*): How could you imagine I had any feeling against you?

HIALMAR: You had at first, you know.

GREGERS: How at first?

HIALMAR: After the great misfortune. It was natural enough that you should. Your father was within an ace of being drawn into that—well, that terrible business.

GREGERS: Why should that give me any feeling against you? Who can have put that into your head?

HIALMAR: I know it did, Gregers; your father told me so himself.

GREGERS (*starts*): My father! Oh, indeed. H'm.—Was that why you never let me hear from you?—not a single word.

HIALMAR: Yes.

GREGERS: Not even when you made up your mind to become a photographer?

HIALMAR: Your father said I had better not write to you at all, about anything.

GREGERS (*looking straight before him*): Well, well, perhaps he was right.—But tell me now, Hialmar: are you pretty well satisfied with your present position?

HIALMAR (*with a little sigh*): Oh, yes, I am; I have really no cause to complain. At first, as you may guess, I felt it a little strange. It was such a totally new state of things for me. But of course my whole circumstances were totally changed. Father's utter, irretrievable ruin,—the shame and disgrace of it, Gregers . . .

GREGERS (*affected*): Yes, yes; I understand.

HIALMAR: I couldn't think of remaining at college; there wasn't a shilling to spare; on the contrary, there were debts—mainly to your father, I believe . . .

GREGERS: H'm . . .

HIALMAR: In short, I thought it best to break, once for all, with my old surroundings and associations. It was your father that specially urged me to it; and since he interested himself so much in me . . .

GREGERS: My father did?

HIALMAR: Yes, you surely knew that, didn't you? Where do you suppose I found the money to learn photography, and to furnish a studio and make a start? All that cost a pretty penny, I can tell you.

GREGERS: And my father provided the money?

HIALMAR: Yes, my dear fellow, didn't you know? I understood him to say he had written to you about it.

GREGERS: Not a word about his part in the business. He must have forgotten it. Our correspondence has always been purely a business one. So it was my father that . . . !

HIALMAR: Yes, certainly. He didn't wish it to be generally known; but he it was. And of course it was he, too, that put me in a position to marry. Don't you—don't you know about that either?

GREGERS: No, I haven't heard a word of it. (*Shakes him by the arm*) But, my dear Hialmar, I can't tell you what pleasure all this gives

me—pleasure, and self-reproach. I have perhaps done my father injustice after all—in some things. This proves that he has a heart. It shows a sort of compunction . . .

HIALMAR: Compunction . . . ?

GREGERS: Yes, yes—whatever you like to call it. Oh, I can't tell you how glad I am to hear this of father.—So you are a married man, Hialmar! That is further than I shall ever get. Well, I hope you are happy in your married life?

HIALMAR: Yes, thoroughly happy. She is as good and capable a wife as any man could wish for. And she is by no means without culture.

GREGERS (*rather surprised*): No, of course not.

HIALMAR: You see, life is itself an education. Her daily intercourse with me . . . And then we know one or two rather remarkable men, who come a good deal about us. I assure you, you would hardly know Gina again.

GREGERS: Gina?

HIALMAR: Yes; had you forgotten that her name was Gina?

GREGERS: Whose name? I haven't the slightest idea . . .

HIALMAR: Don't you remember that she used to be in service here?

GREGERS (*looks at him*): Is it Gina Hansen . . . ?

HIALMAR: Yes, of course it is Gina Hansen.

GREGERS: . . . who kept house for us during the last year of my mother's illness?

HIALMAR: Yes, exactly. But, my dear friend, I'm quite sure your father told you that I was married.

GREGERS (*who has risen*): Oh, yes, he mentioned it; but not that . . . (*Walking about the room*) Stay—perhaps he did—now that I think of it. My father always writes such short letters. (*Half seats himself on the arm of the chair*) Now tell me, Hialmar—this is interesting—how did you come to know Gina—your wife?

HIALMAR: The simplest thing in the world. You know Gina did not stay here long; everything was so much upset at that time, owing to

your mother's illness and so forth, that Gina was not equal to it all; so she gave notice and left. That was the year before your mother died—or it may have been the same year.

GREGERS: It was the same year. I was up at the works then. But afterwards . . . ?

HIALMAR: Well, Gina lived at home with her mother, Madam Hansen, an excellent hard-working woman, who kept a little eating-house. She had a room to let, too; a very nice comfortable room.

GREGERS: And I suppose you were lucky enough to secure it?

HIALMAR: Yes; in fact, it was your father that recommended it to me. So it was there, you see, that I really came to know Gina.

GREGERS: And then you got engaged?

HIALMAR: Yes. It doesn't take young people long to fall in love . . . ; h'm . . .

GREGERS (*rises and moves about a little*): Tell me: was it after your engagement—was it then that my father—I mean was it then that you began to take up photography?

HIALMAR: Yes, precisely. I wanted to make a start and to set up house as soon as possible; and your father and I agreed that this photography business was the readiest way. Gina thought so, too. Oh, and there was another thing in its favour, by-the-bye; it happened, luckily, that Gina had learnt to retouch.

GREGERS: That chimed in marvellously.

HIALMAR (*pleased, rises*): Yes, didn't it? Don't you think it was a marvellous piece of luck?

GREGERS: Oh, unquestionably. My father seems to have been almost a kind of providence for you.

HIALMAR (*with emotion*): He did not forsake his old friend's son in the hour of his need. For he has a heart, you see.

MRS. SÖRBY (*enters, arm-in-arm with* WERLE): Nonsense, my dear Mr. Werle; you mustn't stop there any longer staring at all the lights. It's very bad for you.

WERLE (*lets go her arm and passes his hand over his eyes*): I daresay you are right.

(PETTERSEN *and* JENSEN *carry round refreshment trays.*)

MRS. SÖRBY (*to the guests in the other room*): This way, if you please, gentlemen. Whoever wants a glass of punch must be so good as to come in here.

THE FLABBY GENTLEMAN (*comes up to* MRS. SÖRBY): Surely, it isn't possible that you have suspended our cherished right to smoke?

MRS. SÖRBY: Yes. No smoking here, in Mr. Werle's sanctum, Chamberlain.

THE THIN-HAIRED GENTLEMAN: When did you enact these stringent amendments on the cigar law, Mrs. Sörby?

MRS. SÖRBY: After the last dinner, Chamberlain, when certain persons permitted themselves to overstep the mark.

THE THIN-HAIRED GENTLEMAN: And may one never overstep the mark a little bit, Madame Bertha? Not the least little bit?

MRS. SÖRBY: Not in any respect whatsoever, Mr. Balle.

(*Most of the guests have assembled in the study; servants hand round glasses of punch.*)

WERLE (*to* HIALMAR, *who is standing beside a table*): What are you studying so intensely, Ekdal?

HIALMAR: Only an album, Mr. Werle.

THE THIN-HAIRED GENTLEMAN (*who is wandering about*): Ah, photographs! They are quite in your line, of course.

THE FLABBY GENTLEMAN (*in an armchair*): Haven't you brought any of your own with you?

HIALMAR: No, I haven't.

THE FLABBY GENTLEMAN: You ought to have; it's very good for the digestion to sit and look at pictures.

THE THIN-HAIRED GENTLEMAN: And it contributes to the entertainment, you know.

THE SHORT-SIGHTED GENTLEMAN: And all contributions are thankfully received.

MRS. SÖRBY: The Chamberlains think that when one is invited out to dinner, one ought to exert oneself a little in return, Mr. Ekdal.

THE FLABBY GENTLEMAN: Where one dines so well, that duty becomes a pleasure.

THE THIN-HAIRED GENTLEMAN: And when it's a case of the struggle for existence, you know . . .

MRS. SÖRBY: I quite agree with you!

(*They continue the conversation, with laughter and joking.*)

GREGERS (*softly*): You must join in, Hialmar.

HIALMAR (*writhing*): What am I to talk about?

THE FLABBY GENTLEMAN: Don't you think, Mr. Werle, that Tokay may be considered one of the more wholesome sorts of wine?

WERLE (*by the fire*): I can answer for the Tokay you had today, at any rate; it's one of the very finest seasons. Of course you would notice that.

THE FLABBY GENTLEMAN: Yes, it had a remarkably delicate flavour.

HIALMAR (*shyly*): Is there any difference between the seasons?

THE FLABBY GENTLEMAN (*laughs*): Come! That's good!

WERLE (*smiles*): It really doesn't pay to set fine wine before you.

THE THIN-HAIRED GENTLEMAN: Tokay is like photographs, Mr. Ekdal: they both need sunshine. Am I not right?

HIALMAR: Yes, light is important no doubt.

MRS. SÖRBY: And it's exactly the same with Chamberlains—they, too, depend very much on sunshine,* as the saying is.

THE THIN-HAIRED GENTLEMAN: Oh, fie! That's a very threadbare sarcasm!

THE SHORT-SIGHTED GENTLEMAN: Mrs. Sörby is coming out . . .

* The "sunshine" of court favour.

THE FLABBY GENTLEMAN: . . . and at our expense, too. (*Holds up his finger reprovingly*) Oh, Madame Bertha, Madame Bertha!

MRS. SÖRBY: Yes, and there's not the least doubt that the seasons differ greatly. The old vintages are the finest.

THE SHORT-SIGHTED GENTLEMAN: Do you reckon me among the old vintages?

MRS. SÖRBY: Oh, far from it.

THE THIN-HAIRED GENTLEMAN: There now! But me, dear Mrs. Sörby . . . ?

THE FLABBY GENTLEMAN: Yes, and me? What vintage should you say that we belong to?

MRS. SÖRBY: Why, to the sweet vintage, gentlemen.

(*She sips a glass of punch. The gentlemen laugh and flirt with her.*)

WERLE: Mrs. Sörby can always find a loop-hole—when she wants to. Fill your glasses, gentlemen! Pettersen, will you see to it . . . ! Gregers, suppose we have a glass together. (GREGERS *does not move*) Won't you join us, Ekdal? I found no opportunity of drinking with you at table.

(GRÅBERG, *the bookkeeper, looks in at the baize door.*)

GRÅBERG: Excuse me, sir, but I can't get out.

WERLE: Have you been locked in again?

GRÅBERG: Yes, and Flakstad has carried off the keys.

WERLE: Well, you can pass out this way.

GRÅBERG: But there's some one else . . .

WERLE: All right; come through, both of you. Don't be afraid.

(GRÅBERG *and* OLD EKDAL *come out of the office.*)

WERLE (*involuntarily*): Ugh!

(*The laughter and talk among the guests cease.* HIALMAR *starts at the sight of his father, puts down his glass and turns towards the fireplace.*)

EKDAL (*does not look up, but makes little bows to both sides as he passes, murmuring*): Beg pardon, come the wrong way. Door locked—door locked. Beg pardon.

(*He and* GRÅBERG *go out by the back, to the right.*)

WERLE (*between his teeth*): That idiot Gråberg.

GREGERS (*open-mouthed and staring, to* HIALMAR): Why surely that wasn't . . . !

THE FLABBY GENTLEMAN: What's the matter? Who was it?

GREGERS: Oh, nobody, only the bookkeeper and some one with him.

THE SHORT-SIGHTED GENTLEMAN (*to* HIALMAR): Did you know that man?

HIALMAR: I don't know—I didn't notice . . .

THE FLABBY GENTLEMAN: What the deuce has come over every one?

(*He joins another group who are talking softly.*)

MRS. SÖRBY (*whispers to the servant*): Give him something to take with him;—something good, mind.

PETTERSEN (*nods*): I'll see to it. (*Goes out.*)

GREGERS (*softly and with emotion, to* HIALMAR): So that was really he!

HIALMAR: Yes.

GREGERS: And you could stand there and deny that you knew him!

HIALMAR (*whispers vehemently*): But how could I . . . !

GREGERS: . . . acknowledge your own father?

HIALMAR (*with pain*): Oh, if you were in my place . . .

(*The conversation amongst the guests, which has been carried on in a low tone, now swells into constrained joviality.*)

THE THIN-HAIRED GENTLEMAN (*approaching* HIALMAR *and* GREGERS *in a friendly manner*): Aha! Reviving old college memories, eh? Don't you smoke, Mr. Ekdal? May I give you a light? Oh, by-the-bye, we mustn't . . . .

HIALMAR: No, thank you, I won't . . .

THE FLABBY GENTLEMAN: Haven't you a nice little poem you could recite to us, Mr. Ekdal? You used to recite so charmingly.

HIALMAR: I am sorry I can't remember anything.

THE FLABBY GENTLEMAN: Oh, that's a pity. Well, what shall we do, Balle?

(*Both gentlemen move away and pass into the other room.*)

HIALMAR (*gloomily*): Gregers—I am going! When a man has felt the crushing hand of Fate, you see . . . Say good-bye to your father for me.

GREGERS: Yes, yes. Are you going straight home?

HIALMAR: Yes. Why?

GREGERS: Oh, because I may perhaps look in on you later.

HIALMAR: No, you mustn't do that. You must not come to my home. Mine is a melancholy abode, Gregers; especially after a splendid banquet like this. We can always arrange to meet somewhere in the town.

MRS. SÖRBY (*who has quietly approached*): Are you going, Ekdal?

HIALMAR: Yes.

MRS. SÖRBY: Remember me to Gina.

HIALMAR: Thanks.

MRS. SÖRBY: And say I am coming up to see her one of these days.

HIALMAR: Yes, thank you. (*To* GREGERS) Stay here; I will slip out unobserved.

(*He saunters away, then into the other room, and so out to the right.*)

MRS. SÖRBY (*softly to the servant, who has come back*): Well, did you give the old man something?

PETTERSEN: Yes; I sent him off with a bottle of cognac.

MRS. SÖRBY: Oh, you might have thought of something better than that.

PETTERSEN: Oh, no, Mrs. Sörby; cognac is what he likes best in the world.

THE FLABBY GENTLEMAN (*in the doorway with a sheet of music in his hand*): Shall we play a duet, Mrs. Sörby?

MRS. SÖRBY: Yes, suppose we do.

THE GUESTS: Bravo, bravo!

(*She goes with all the guests through the back room, out to the right.* GREGERS *remains standing by the fire.* WERLE *is looking for something on the writing-table and appears to wish that* GREGERS *would go; as* GREGERS *does not move,* WERLE *goes towards the door.*)

GREGERS: Father, won't you stay a moment?

WERLE (*stops*): What is it?

GREGERS: I must have a word with you.

WERLE: Can it not wait till we are alone?

GREGERS: No, it cannot; for perhaps we shall never be alone together.

WERLE (*drawing nearer*): What do you mean by that?

(*During what follows, the pianoforte is faintly heard from the distant music-room.*)

GREGERS: How has that family been allowed to go so miserably to the wall?

WERLE: You mean the Ekdals, I suppose.

GREGERS: Yes, I mean the Ekdals. Lieutenant Ekdal was once so closely associated with you.

WERLE: Much too closely; I have felt that to my cost for many a year. It is thanks to him that I—yes *I*—have had a kind of slur cast upon my reputation.

GREGERS (*softly*): Are you sure that he alone was to blame?

WERLE: Who else do you suppose . . . ?

GREGERS: You and he acted together in that affair of the forests . . .

WERLE: But was it not Ekdal that drew the map of the tracts we had bought—that fraudulent map! It was he who felled all that timber illegally on Government ground. In fact, the whole management was in his hands. I was quite in the dark as to what Lieutenant Ekdal was doing.

GREGERS: Lieutenant Ekdal himself seems to have been very much in the dark as to what he was doing.

WERLE: That may be. But the fact remains that he was found guilty and I acquitted.

GREGERS: Yes, I know that nothing was proved against you.

WERLE: Acquittal is acquittal. Why do you rake up these old miseries that turned my hair grey before its time? Is that the sort of thing you have been brooding over up there, all these years? I can assure you, Gregers, here in the town the whole story has been forgotten long ago—so far as *I* am concerned.

GREGERS: But that unhappy Ekdal family . . .

WERLE: What would you have had me do for the people? When Ekdal came out of prison he was a broken-down being, past all help. There are people in the world who dive to the bottom the moment they get a couple of slugs in their body and never come to the surface again. You may take my word for it, Gregers, I have done all I could without positively laying myself open to all sorts of suspicion and gossip . . .

GREGERS: Suspicion . . . ? Oh, I see.

WERLE: I have given Ekdal copying to do for the office, and I pay him far, far more for it than his work is worth . . .

GREGERS (*without looking at him*): H'm; that I don't doubt.

WERLE: You laugh? Do you think I am not telling you the truth? Well, I certainly can't refer you to my books, for I never enter payments of that sort.

GREGERS (*smiles coldly*): No, there are certain payments it is best to keep no account of.

WERLE (*taken aback*): What do you mean by that?

GREGERS (*mustering up courage*): Have you entered what it cost you to have Hialmar Ekdal taught photography?

WERLE: I? How "entered" it?

GREGERS: I have learnt that it was you who paid for his training. And I have learnt, too, that it was you who enabled him to set up house so comfortably.

WERLE: Well, and yet you talk as though I had done nothing for the Ekdals! I can assure you these people have cost me enough in all conscience.

GREGERS: Have you entered any of these expenses in your books?

WERLE: Why do you ask?

GREGERS: Oh, I have my reasons. Now tell me: when you interested yourself so warmly in your old friend's son—it was just before his marriage, was it not?

WERLE: Why, deuce take it—after all these years, how can I . . . ?

GREGERS: You wrote me a letter about that time—a business letter, of course; and in a postscript you mentioned—quite briefly—that Hialmar Ekdal had married a Miss Hansen.

WERLE: Yes, that was quite right. That was her name.

GREGERS: But you did not mention that this Miss Hansen was Gina Hansen—our former housekeeper.

WERLE (*with a forced laugh of derision*): No; to tell the truth, it didn't occur to me that you were so particularly interested in our former housekeeper.

GREGERS: No more I was. But (*lowers his voice*) there were others in this house who were particularly interested in her.

WERLE: What do you mean by that? (*Flaring up*) You are not alluding to me, I hope?

GREGERS (*softly but firmly*): Yes, I am alluding to you.

WERLE: And you dare . . . ! You presume to . . . ! How can that ungrateful hound—that photographer fellow—how dare he go making such insinuations!

GREGERS: Hialmar has never breathed a word about this. I don't believe he has the faintest suspicion of such a thing.

WERLE: Then where have you got it from? Who can have put such notions in your head?

GREGERS: My poor unhappy mother told me; and that the very last time I saw her.

WERLE: Your mother! I might have known as much! You and she—you always held together. It was she who turned you against me, from the first.

GREGERS: No, it was all that she had to suffer and submit to, until she broke down and came to such a pitiful end.

WERLE: Oh, she had nothing to suffer or submit to; not more than most people, at all events. But there's no getting on with morbid, overstrained creatures—that I have learnt to my cost.—And you could go on nursing such a suspicion—burrowing into all sorts of old rumours and slanders against your own father! I must say, Gregers, I really think that at your age you might find something more useful to do.

GREGERS: Yes, it is high time.

WERLE: Then perhaps your mind would be easier than it seems to be now. What can be your object in remaining up at the works, year out and year in, drudging away like a common clerk, and not drawing a farthing more than the ordinary monthly wage? It is downright folly.

GREGERS: Ah, if I were only sure of that.

WERLE: I understand you well enough. You want to be independent; you won't be beholden to me for anything. Well, now there happens to be an opportunity for you to become independent, your own master in everything.

GREGERS: Indeed? In what way . . . ?

WERLE: When I wrote you insisting on your coming to town at once—h'm . . .

GREGERS: Yes, what is it you really want of me? I have been waiting all day to know.

WERLE: I want to propose that you should enter the firm, as partner.

GREGERS: I! Join your firm? As partner?

WERLE: Yes. It would not involve our being constantly together. You could take over the business here in town, and I should move up to the works.

GREGERS: You would?

WERLE: The fact is, I am not so fit for work as I once was. I am obliged to spare my eyes, Gregers; they have begun to trouble me.

GREGERS: They have always been weak.

WERLE: Not as they are now. And besides, circumstances might possibly make it desirable for me to live up there—for a time, at any rate.

GREGERS: That is certainly quite a new idea to me.

WERLE: Listen, Gregers: there are many things that stand between us; but we are father and son after all. We ought surely to be able to come to some sort of understanding with each other.

GREGERS: Outwardly, you mean, of course?

WERLE: Well, even that would be something. Think it over, Gregers. Don't you think it ought to be possible? Eh?

GREGERS (*looking at him coldly*): There is something behind all this.

WERLE: How so?

GREGERS: You want to make use of me in some way.

WERLE: In such a close relationship as ours, the one can always be useful to the other.

GREGERS: Yes, so people say.

WERLE: I want very much to have you at home with me for a time. I am a lonely man, Gregers; I have always felt lonely, all my life through; but most of all now that I am getting up in years. I feel the need of some one about me . . .

GREGERS: You have Mrs. Sörby.

WERLE: Yes, I have her; and she has become, I may say, almost indispensable to me. She is lively and even-tempered; she brightens up the house; and that is a very great thing for me.

GREGERS: Well, then, you have everything just as you wish it.

WERLE: Yes, but I am afraid it can't last. A woman so situated may easily find herself in a false position, in the eyes of the world. For that matter it does a man no good, either.

GREGERS: Oh, when a man gives such dinners as you give, he can risk a great deal.

WERLE: Yes, but how about the woman, Gregers? I fear she won't accept the situation much longer; and even if she did—even if, out of attachment to me, she were to take her chance of gossip and scandal and all that . . . ? Do you think, Gregers—you with your strong sense of justice . . .

GREGERS (*interrupts him*): Tell me in one word: are you thinking of marrying her?

WERLE: Suppose I were thinking of it? What then?

GREGERS: That's what I say: what then?

WERLE: Should you be inflexibly opposed to it!

GREGERS: Not at all. Not by any means.

WERLE: I was not sure whether your devotion to your mother's memory . . .

GREGERS: I am not overstrained.

WERLE: Well, whatever you may or may not be, at all events you have lifted a great weight from my mind. I am extremely pleased that I can reckon on your concurrence in this matter.

GREGERS (*looking intently at him*): Now I see the use you want to put me to.

WERLE: Use to put you to? What an expression!

GREGERS: Oh, don't let us be nice in our choice of words—not when we are alone together, at any rate. (*With a short laugh*) Well, well! So this is what made it absolutely essential that I should come to

town in person. For the sake of Mrs. Sörby, we are to get up a pretence at family life in the house—a tableau of filial affection! That will be something new indeed.

WERLE: How dare you speak in that tone!

GREGERS: Was there ever any family life here? Never since I can remember. But now, forsooth, your plans demand something of the sort. No doubt it will have an excellent effect when it is reported that the son has hastened home, on the wings of filial piety, to the grey-haired father's wedding-feast. What will then remain of all the rumours as to the wrongs the poor dead mother had to submit to? Not a vestige. Her son annihilates them at one stroke.

WERLE: Gregers—I believe there is no one in the world you detest as you do me.

GREGERS (*softly*): I have seen you at too close quarters.

WERLE: You have seen me with your mother's eyes. (*Lowers his voice a little*) But you should remember that her eyes were—clouded now and then.

GREGERS (*quivering*): I see what you are hinting at. But who was to blame for mother's unfortunate weakness? Why you, and all those . . . ! The last of them was this woman that you palmed off upon Hialmar Ekdal, when you were . . . Ugh!

WERLE (*shrugs his shoulders*): Word for word as if it were your mother speaking!

GREGERS (*without heeding*): And there he is now, with his great, confiding, childlike mind, compassed about with all this treachery—living under the same roof with such a creature and never dreaming that what he calls his home is built upon a lie! (*Comes a step nearer*) When I look back upon your past, I seem to see a battle-field with shattered lives on every hand.

WERLE: I begin to think the chasm that divides us is too wide.

GREGERS (*bowing, with self-command*): So I have observed; and therefore I take my hat and go.

WERLE: You are going! Out of the house?

GREGERS: Yes. For at last I see my mission in life.

WERLE: What mission?

GREGERS: You would only laugh if I told you.

WERLE: A lonely man doesn't laugh so easily, Gregers.

GREGERS: (*pointing towards the background*): Look, father,—the Chamberlains are playing blind-man's-buff with Mrs. Sörby.—Good-night and good-bye.

(*He goes out by the back to the right. Sounds of laughter and merriment from the company, who are now visible in the outer room.*)

WERLE (*muttering contemptuously after* GREGERS): Ha . . . ! Poor wretch—and he says he is not overstrained!

(*The Curtain Falls.*)

Act Two

HJALMAR EKDAL'S *studio, a good-sized room, evidently in the top story of the building. On the right, a sloping roof of large panes of glass, half-covered by a blue curtain. In the right-hand corner, at the back, the entrance door; farther forward, on the same side, a door leading to the sitting-room. Two doors on the opposite side, and between them an iron stove. At the back, a wide double sliding-door. The studio is plainly but comfortably fitted up and furnished. Between the doors on the right, standing out a little from the wall, a sofa with a table and some chairs; on the table lighted lamp with a shade; beside the stove an old armchair. Photographic instruments and apparatus of different kinds lying about the room. Against the back wall, to the left of the double door, stands a bookcase containing a few books, boxes, and bottles of chemicals, instruments, tools, and other objects. Photographs and small articles, such as camel's-hair pencils, paper, and so forth, lie on the table.*

GINA EKDAL *sits on a chair by the table, sewing.* HEDVIG *is sitting on the sofa, with her hands shading her eyes and her thumbs in her ears, reading a book.*

GINA (*glances once or twice at* HEDVIG, *as if with secret anxiety; then says*): Hedvig!

(HEDVIG *does not hear.*)

GINA (*repeats more loudly*): Hedvig!

HEDVIG (*takes away her hands and looks up*): Yes, mother?

GINA: Hedvig dear, you mustn't sit reading any longer now.

HEDVIG: Oh, mother, mayn't I read a little more? Just a little bit?

GINA: No, no, you must put away your book now. Father doesn't like it; he never reads hisself in the evening.

HEDVIG (*shuts the book*): No, father doesn't care much about reading.

GINA (*puts aside her sewing and takes up a lead pencil and a little account-book from the table*): Can you remember how much we paid for the butter today?

HEDVIG: It was one crown sixty-five.

GINA: That's right. (*Puts it down*) It's terrible what a lot of butter we get through in this house. Then there was the smoked sausage, and the cheese—let me see—(*Writes*)—and the ham—(*Adds up*) Yes, that makes just . . .

HEDVIG: And then the beer.

GINA: Yes, to be sure. (*Writes*) How it do mount up! But we can't manage with no less.

HEDVIG: And then you and I didn't need anything hot for dinner, as father was out.

GINA: No; that was so much to the good. And then I took eight crowns fifty for the photographs.

HEDVIG: Really! So much as that?

GINA: Exactly eight crowns fifty.

(*Silence.* GINA *takes up her sewing again,* HEDVIG *takes paper and pencil and begins to draw, shading her eyes with her left hand.*)

HEDVIG: Isn't it jolly to think that father is at Mr. Werle's big dinner-party?

GINA: You know he's not really Mr. Werle's guest. It was the son invited him. (*After a pause*) We have nothing to do with that Mr. Werle.

HEDVIG: I'm longing for father to come home. He promised to ask Mrs. Sörby for something nice for me.

GINA: Yes, there's plenty of good things going in that house, I can tell you.

HEDVIG (*goes on drawing*): And I believe I'm a little hungry, too.

(OLD EKDAL, *with the paper parcel under his arm and another parcel in his coat pocket, comes in by the entrance door.*)

GINA: How late you are today, grandfather!

EKDAL: They had locked the office door. Had to wait in Gråberg's room. And then they let me through—h'm.

HEDVIG: Did you get some more copying to do, grandfather?

EKDAL: This whole packet. Just look.

GINA: That's capital.

HEDVIG: And you have another parcel in your pocket.

EKDAL: Eh? Oh, never mind, that's nothing. (*Puts his stick away in a corner*) This work will keep me going a long time, Gina. (*Opens one of the sliding-doors in the back wall a little*) Hush! (*Peeps into the room for a moment, then pushes the door carefully to again*) Hee-hee! They're fast asleep, all the lot of them. And she's gone into the basket herself. Hee-hee!

HEDVIG: Are you sure she isn't cold in that basket, grandfather?

EKDAL: Not a bit of it! Cold? With all that straw? (*Goes towards the farther door on the left*) There are matches in here, I suppose.

GINA: The matches is on the drawers.

(EKDAL *goes into his room.*)

HEDVIG: It's nice that grandfather has got all that copying.

GINA: Yes, poor old father; it means a bit of pocket-money for him.

HEDVIG: And he won't be able to sit the whole forenoon down a that horrid Madam Eriksen's.

GINA: No more he won't. (*Short silence.*)

HEDVIG: Do you suppose they are still at the dinner-table?

GINA: Goodness knows; as like as not.

HEDVIG: Think of all the delicious things father is having to eat! I'm certain he'll be in splendid spirits when he comes. Don't you think so, mother?

GINA: Yes: and if only we could tell him that we'd got the room let . . .

HEDVIG: But we don't need that this evening.

GINA: Oh, we'd be none the worst of it, I can tell you. It's no use to us as it is.

HEDVIG: I mean we don't need it this evening, for father will be in a good humour at any rate. It is best to keep the letting of the room for another time.

GINA (*looks across at her*): You like having some good news to tell father when he comes home in the evening?

HEDVIG: Yes; for then things are pleasanter somehow.

GINA (*thinking to herself*): Yes, yes, there's something in that.

(OLD EKDAL *comes in again and is going out by the foremost door to the left.*)

GINA (*half turning in her chair*): Do you want something out of the kitchen, grandfather?

EKDAL: Yes, yes, I do. Don't you trouble. (*Goes out.*)

GINA: He's not poking away at the fire, is he? (*Waits a moment*) Hedvig, go and see what he's about.

(EKDAL *comes in again with a small jug of steaming hot water.*)

HEDVIG: Have you been getting some hot water, grandfather?

EKDAL: Yes, hot water. Want it for something. Want to write, and the ink has got as thick as porridge—h'm.

GINA: But you'd best have your supper first, grandfather. It's laid in there.

EKDAL: Can't be bothered with supper, Gina. Very busy, I tell you. No one's to come to my room. No one—h'm.

(*He goes into his room;* GINA *and* HEDVIG *look at each other.*)

GINA (*softly*): Can you imagine where he's got money from?

HEDVIG: From Gråberg, perhaps.

GINA: Not a bit of it. Gråberg always sends the money to me.

HEDVIG: Then he must have got a bottle on credit somewhere.

GINA: Poor grandfather, who'd give him credit?

(HIALMAR EKDAL, *in an overcoat and grey felt hat, comes in from the right.*)

GINA (*throws down her sewing and rises*): Why, Ekdal, is that you already?

HEDVIG (*at the same time jumping up*): Fancy your coming so soon, father!

HIALMAR (*taking off his hat*): Yes, most of the people were coming away.

HEDVIG: So early?

HIALMAR: Yes, it was a dinner-party, you know. (*Is taking off his overcoat.*)

GINA: Let me help you.

HEDVIG: Me, too.

(*They draw off his coat;* GINA *hangs it up on the back wall.*)

HEDVIG: Were there many people there, father?

HIALMAR: Oh, no, not many. We were about twelve or fourteen at table.

GINA: And you had some talk with them all?

HIALMAR: Oh, yes, a little; but Gregers took me up most of the time.

GINA: Is Gregers as ugly as ever?

HIALMAR: Well, he's not very much to look at. Hasn't the old man come home?

HEDVIG: Yes, grandfather is in his room, writing.

HIALMAR: Did he say anything?

GINA: No, what should he say?

HIALMAR: Didn't he say anything about . . . ? I heard something about his having been with Gråberg. I'll go in and see him for a moment.

GINA: No, no, better not.

HIALMAR: Why not? Did he say he didn't want me to go in?

GINA: I don't think he wants to see nobody this evening . . .

HEDVIG (*making signs*): H'm—h'm!

GINA (*not noticing*): . . . he has been in to fetch hot water . . .

HIALMAR: Aha! Then he's . . .

GINA: Yes, I suppose so.

HIALMAR: Oh, God! my poor old white-haired father! . . . Well, well; there let him sit and get all the enjoyment he can.

(OLD EKDAL, *in an indoor coat and with a lighted pipe, comes from his room.*)

EKDAL: Got home? Thought it was you I heard talking.

HIALMAR: Yes, I have just come.

EKDAL: You didn't see me, did you?

HIALMAR: No, but they told me you had passed through—so I thought I would follow you.

EKDAL: H'm, good of you, Hialmar.—Who were they, all those fellows?

HIALMAR: Oh, all sorts of people. There was Chamberlain Flor, and Chamberlain Balle, and Chamberlain Kaspersen and Chamberlain—this, that, and the other—I don't know who all . . .

EKDAL (*nodding*): Hear that, Gina! Chamberlains every one of them!

GINA: Yes, I hear as they're terrible genteel in that house nowadays.

HEDVIG: Did the Chamberlains sing, father? Or did they read aloud?

HIALMAR: No, they only talked nonsense. They wanted me to recite something for them; but I knew better than that.

EKDAL: You weren't to be persuaded, eh?

GINA: Oh, you might have done it.

HIALMAR: No; one mustn't be at everybody's beck and call. (*Walks about the room*) That's not my way, at any rate.

EKDAL: No, no; Hialmar's not to be had for the asking, he isn't.

HIALMAR: I don't see why *I* should bother myself to entertain people on the rare occasions when I go into society. Let the others exert themselves. These fellows go from one great dinner-table to the next and gorge and guzzle day out and day in. It's for them to bestir themselves and do something in return for all the good feeding they get.

GINA: But you didn't say that?

HIALMAR (*humming*): Ho-ho-ho . . . ; faith, I gave them a bit of my mind.

EKDAL: Not the Chamberlains?

HIALMAR: Oh, why not? (*Lightly*) After that, we had a little discussion about Tokay.

EKDAL: Tokay! There's a fine wine for you!

HIALMAR (*comes to a standstill*): It may be a fine wine. But of course you know the vintages differ; it all depends on how much sunshine the grapes have had.

GINA: Why, you know everything, Ekdal.

EKDAL: And did they dispute that?

HIALMAR: They tried to; but they were requested to observe that it was just the same with Chamberlains—that with them, too, different batches were of different qualities.

GINA: What things you do think of!

EKDAL: Hee-hee! So they got that in their pipes, too?

HIALMAR: Right in their teeth.

EKDAL: Do you hear that, Gina? He said it right in the very teeth of all the Chamberlains.

GINA: Fancy . . . ! Right in their teeth!

HIALMAR: Yes, but I don't want it talked about. One doesn't speak of such things. The whole affair passed off quite amicably of course. They were nice, genial fellows; I didn't want to wound them—not I!

EKDAL: Right in their teeth, though . . . !

HEDVIG (*caressingly*): How nice it is to see you in a dress-coat! It suits you so well, father.

HIALMAR: Yes, don't you think so? And this one really fits to perfection. It fits almost as if it had been made for me;—a little tight in the arm-holes perhaps;—help me, Hedvig (*takes off the coat*). I think I'll put on my jacket. Where is my jacket, Gina?

GINA: Here it is. (*Brings the jacket and helps him.*)

HIALMAR: That's it! Don't forget to send the coat back to Molvik first thing tomorrow morning.

GINA (*laying it away*): I'll be sure and see to it.

HIALMAR (*stretching himself*): After all, there's a more homely feeling about this. A free-and-easy indoor costume suits my whole personality better. Don't you think so, Hedvig?

HEDVIG: Yes, father.

HIALMAR: When I loosen my necktie into a pair of flowing ends—like this—eh?

HEDVIG: Yes, that goes so well with your moustache and the sweep of your curls.

HIALMAR: I should not call them curls exactly; I should rather say locks.

HEDVIG: Yes, they are too big for curls.

HIALMAR: Locks describes them better.

HEDVIG (*after a pause, twitching his jacket*): Father.

HIALMAR: Well, what is it?

HEDVIG: Oh, you know very well.

HIALMAR: No, really I don't . . .

HEDVIG (*half laughing, half whimpering*): Oh, yes, father; now don't tease me any longer!

HIALMAR: Why, what do you mean?

HEDVIG (*shaking him*): Oh, what nonsense; come, where are they, father? All the good things you promised me, you know?

HIALMAR: Oh—if I haven't forgotten all about them!

HEDVIG: Now you're only teasing me, father! Oh, it's too bad of you! Where have you put them?

HIALMAR: No, I positively forgot to get anything. But wait a little! I have something else for you, Hedvig. (*Goes and searches in the pockets of the coat.*)

HEDVIG (*skipping and clapping her hands*): Oh, mother, mother!

GINA: There, you see; if you only give him time . . .

HIALMAR (*with a paper*): Look, here it is.

HEDVIG: That? Why, that's only a paper.

HIALMAR: That is the bill of fare, my dear; the whole bill of fare. Here you see: "Menu"—that means bill of fare.

HEDVIG: Haven't you anything else?

HIALMAR: I forgot the other things, I tell you. But you may take my word for it, these dainties are very unsatisfying. Sit down at the table and read the bill of fare, and then I'll describe to you how the dishes taste. Here you are, Hedvig.

HEDVIG (*gulping down her tears*): Thank you. (*She seats herself, but does not read;* GINA *makes signs to her;* HIALMAR *notices it.*)

HIALMAR (*pacing up and down the room*): It's monstrous what absurd things the father of a family is expected to think of; and if he forgets the smallest trifle, he is treated to sour faces at once. Well, well, one gets used to that, too. (*Stops near the stove, by the old man's chair*) Have you peeped in there this evening, father?

EKDAL: Yes, to be sure I have. She's gone into the basket.

HIALMAR: Ah, she has gone into the basket. Then she's beginning to get used to it.

EKDAL: Yes; just as I prophesied. But you know there are still a few little things . . .

HIALMAR: A few improvements, yes.

EKDAL: They've got to be made, you know.

HIALMAR: Yes, let us have a talk about the improvements, father. Come, let us sit on the sofa.

EKDAL: All right. H'm—think I'll just fill my pipe first. Must clean it out, too. H'm. (*He goes into his room.*)

GINA (*smiling to* HIALMAR): His pipe!

HIALMAR: Oh, yes, yes, Gina; let him alone—the poor, shipwrecked old man.—Yes, these improvements—we had better get them out of hand tomorrow.

GINA: You'll hardly have time tomorrow, Ekdal.

HEDVIG (*interposing*): Oh, yes he will, mother!

GINA: . . . for remember them prints that has to be retouched; they've sent for them time after time.

HIALMAR: There now! those prints again! I shall get them finished all right! Have any new orders come in?

GINA: No, worse luck; tomorrow I have nothing but those two sittings, you know.

HIALMAR: Nothing else? Oh, no, if people won't set about things with a will . . .

GINA: But what more can I do? Don't I advertise in the papers as much as we can afford?

HIALMAR: Yes, the papers, the papers; you see how much good they do. And I suppose no one has been to look at the room either?

GINA: No, not yet.

HIALMAR: That was only to be expected. If people won't keep their eyes open. . . . Nothing can be done without a real effort, Gina!

HEDVIG (*going towards him*): Shall I fetch you the flute, father?

HIALMAR: No; no flute for me; *I* want no pleasures in this world. (*Pacing about*) Yes, indeed I will work tomorrow; you shall see if I don't. You may be sure I shall work as long as my strength holds out.

GINA: But my dear, good Ekdal, I didn't mean it in that way.

HEDVIG: Father, mayn't I bring in a bottle of beer?

HIALMAR: No, certainly not. I require nothing, nothing . . . (*Comes to a standstill*) Beer? Was it beer you were talking about?

HEDVIG (*cheerfully*): Yes, father; beautiful, fresh beer.

HIALMAR: Well—since you insist upon it, you may bring in a bottle.

GINA: Yes, do; and we'll be nice and cosy.

(HEDVIG *runs towards the kitchen door.*)

HIALMAR (*by the stove, stops her, looks at her, puts his arm round her neck and presses her to him*): Hedvig, Hedvig!

HEDVIG (*with tears of joy*): My dear, kind father!

HIALMAR: No, don't call me that. Here have I been feasting at the rich man's table,—battening at the groaning board . . . ! And I couldn't even . . . !

GINA (*sitting at the table*): Oh, nonsense, nonsense, Ekdal.

HIALMAR: It's not nonsense! And yet you mustn't be too hard upon me. You know that I love you for all that.

HEDVIG (*throwing her arms round him*): And we love you, oh so dearly, father!

HIALMAR: And if I am unreasonable once in a while,—why then—you must remember that I am a man beset by a host of cares. There, there! (*Dries his eyes*) No beer at such a moment as this. Give me the flute.

(HEDVIG *runs to the bookcase and fetches it.*)

HIALMAR: Thanks! That's right. With my flute in my hand and you two at my side . . . ah . . . !

(HEDVIG *seats herself at the table near* GINA; HIALMAR *paces backwards and forwards, pipes up vigorously and plays a Bohemian peasant dance, but in a slow plaintive tempo, and with sentimental expression.*)

HIALMAR (*breaking off the melody, holds out his left hand to* GINA *and says with emotion*): Our roof may be poor and humble, Gina; but it is home. And with all my heart I say: here dwells my happiness.

(*He begins to play again; almost immediately after, a knocking is heard at the entrance door.*)

GINA (*rising*): Hush, Ekdal,—I think there's some one at the door.

HIALMAR (*laying the flute on the bookcase*): There! Again!

(GINA *goes and opens the door.*)

GREGERS WERLE (*in the passage*): Excuse me . . .

GINA (*starting back slightly*): Oh!

GREGERS: . . . does not Mr. Ekdal, the photographer, live here?

GINA: Yes, he does.

HIALMAR (*going towards the door*): Gregers! You here after all? Well, come in then.

GREGERS (*coming in*): I told you I would come and look you up.

HIALMAR: But this evening . . . ? Have you left the party?

GREGERS: I have left both the party and my father's house.—Goo evening, Mrs. Ekdal. I don't know whether you recognize me?

GINA: Oh, yes; it's not difficult to know young Mr. Werle again.

GREGERS: No, I am like my mother; and no doubt you remember her

HIALMAR: Left your father's house, did you say?

GREGERS: Yes, I have gone to a hotel.

HIALMAR: Indeed. Well, since you're here, take off your coat and sit down.

GREGERS: Thanks.

(*He takes off his overcoat. He is now dressed in a plain grey suit of a countrified cut.*)

HIALMAR: Here, on the sofa. Make yourself comfortable.

(GREGERS *seats himself on the sofa;* HIALMAR *takes a chair at the table.*)

GREGERS (*looking around him*): So these are your quarters, Hialmar —this is your home.

HIALMAR: This is the studio, as you see . . .

GINA: But it's the largest of our rooms, so we generally sit here.

HIALMAR: We used to live in a better place; but this flat has one great advantage: there are such capital outer rooms . . .

GINA: And we have a room on the other side of the passage that we can let.

GREGERS (*to* HIALMAR): Ah—so you have lodgers, too?

HIALMAR: No, not yet. They're not so easy to find, you see; you have to keep your eyes open. (*To* HEDVIG) What about the beer, eh?

(HEDVIG *nods and goes out into the kitchen.*)

GREGERS: So that is your daughter?

HIALMAR: Yes, that is Hedvig.

GREGERS: And she is your only child?

HIALMAR: Yes, the only one. She is the joy of our lives, and—(*lowering his voice*)—at the same time our deepest sorrow, Gregers.

GREGERS: What do you mean?

HIALMAR: She is in serious danger of losing her eyesight.

GREGERS: Becoming blind?

HIALMAR: Yes. Only the first symptoms have appeared as yet, and she may not feel it much for some time. But the doctor has warned us. It is coming, inexorably.

GREGERS: What a terrible misfortune! How do you account for it?

HIALMAR (*sighs*): Hereditary, no doubt.

GREGERS (*starting*): Hereditary?

GINA: Ekdal's mother had weak eyes.

HIALMAR: Yes, so my father says; I can't remember her.

GREGERS: Poor child! And how does she take it?

HIALMAR: Oh, you can imagine we haven't the heart to tell her of it. She dreams of no danger. Gay and careless and chirping like a little bird, she flutters onward into a life of endless night. (*Overcome*) Oh, it is cruelly hard on me, Gregers.

(HEDVIG *brings a tray with beer and glasses, which she sets upon the table.*)

HIALMAR (*stroking her hair*): Thanks, thanks, Hedvig.

(HEDVIG *puts her arm around his neck and whispers in his ear.*)

HIALMAR: No, no bread and butter just now. (*Looks up*) But perhaps you would like some, Gregers.

GREGERS (*with a gesture of refusal*): No, no thank you.

HIALMAR (*still melancholy*): Well, you can bring in a little all the same. If you have a crust, that is all I want. And plenty of butter on it, mind.

(HEDVIG *nods gaily and goes out into the kitchen again.*)

GREGERS (*who has been following her with his eyes*): She seems quite strong and healthy otherwise.

GINA: Yes. In other ways there's nothing amiss with her, thank goodness.

GREGERS: She promises to be very like you, Mrs. Ekdal. How old is she now?

GINA: Hedvig is close on fourteen; her birthday is the day after tomorrow.

GREGERS: She is pretty tall for her age, then.

GINA: Yes, she's shot up wonderful this last year.

GREGERS: It makes one realize one's own age to see these young people growing up.—How long is it now since you were married?

GINA: We've been married—let me see— just on fifteen years.

GREGERS: Is it so long as that?

GINA (*becomes attentive; looks at him*): Yes, it is indeed.

HIALMAR: Yes, so it is. Fifteen years all but a few months. (*Changing his tone*) They must have been long years for you, up at the works, Gregers.

GREGERS: They seemed long while I was living them; now they are over, I hardly know how the time has gone.

(OLD EKDAL *comes from his room without his pipe, but with his old-fashioned uniform cap on his head; his gait is somewhat unsteady.*)

EKDAL: Come now, Hialmar, let's sit down and have a good talk about this—h'm—what was it again?

HIALMAR (*going towards him*): Father, we have a visitor here—Gregers Werle.—I don't know if you remember him.

EKDAL (*looking at* GREGERS, *who has risen*): Werle? Is that the son? What does he want with me?

HIALMAR: Nothing; it's me he has come to see.

EKDAL: Oh! Then there's nothing wrong?

HIALMAR: No, no, of course not.

EKDAL (*with a large gesture*): Not that I'm afraid, you know; but . . .

GREGERS (*goes over to him*): I bring you a greeting from your old hunting-grounds, Lieutenant Ekdal.

EKDAL: Hunting-grounds?

GREGERS: Yes, up in Höidal, about the works, you know.

EKDAL: Oh, up there. Yes, I knew all those places well in the old days.

GREGERS: You were a great sportsman then.

EKDAL: So I was, I don't deny it. You're looking at my uniform cap. I don't ask anybody's leave to wear it in the house. So long as I don't go out in the streets with it . . .

(HEDVIG *brings a plate of bread and butter, which she puts upon the table.*)

HIALMAR: Sit down, father, and have a glass of beer. Help yourself, Gregers.

(EKDAL *mutters and stumbles over to the sofa.* GREGERS *seats himself on the chair nearest to him,* HIALMAR *on the other side of* GREGERS. GINA *sits a little way from the table, sewing;* HEDVIG *stands beside her father.*)

GREGERS: Can you remember, Lieutenant Ekdal, how Hialmar and I used to come up and visit you in the summer and at Christmas?

EKDAL: Did you? No, no, no; I don't remember it. But sure enough I've been a tidy bit of a sportsman in my day. I've shot bears, too. I've shot nine of 'em, no less.

GREGERS (*looking sympathetically at him*): And now you never get any shooting?

EKDAL: Can't just say that, sir. Get a shot now and then perhaps. Of course not in the old way. For the woods you see—the woods, the woods . . . ! (*Drinks*) Are the woods fine up there now?

GREGERS: Not so fine as in your time. They have been thinned a good deal.

EKDAL: Thinned? (*More softly, and as if afraid*) It's dangerous work that. Bad things come of it. The woods revenge themselves.

HIALMAR (*filling up his glass*): Come—a little more, father.

GREGERS: How can a man like you—such a man for the open air—live in the midst of a stuffy town, boxed within four walls?

EKDAL (*laughs quietly and glances at* HIALMAR): Oh, it's not bad here. Not at all so bad.

GREGERS: But don't you miss all the things that used to be a part of your very being—the cool sweeping breezes, the free life in the woods and on the uplands, among beasts and birds . . . ?

EKDAL (*smiling*): Hialmar, shall we let him see it?

HIALMAR (*hastily and a little embarrassed*): Oh, no, no, father; not this evening.

GREGERS: What does he want to show me?

HIALMAR: Oh, it's only something—you can see it another time.

GREGERS (*continues, to the old man*): You see I have been thinking, Lieutenant Ekdal, that you should come up with me to the works; I am sure to be going back soon. No doubt you could get some copying there, too. And here, you have nothing on earth to interest you—nothing to liven you up.

EKDAL (*stares in astonishment at him*): Have *I* nothing on earth to . . . !

GREGERS: Of course you have Hialmar; but then he has his own family. And a man like you, who has always had such a passion for what is free and wild . . .

EKDAL (*thumps the table*): Hialmar, he shall see it!

HIALMAR: Oh, do you think it's worth while, father? It's all dark.

EKDAL: Nonsense; it's moonlight. (*Rises*) He shall see it, I tell you. Let me pass! Come and help me, Hialmar.

HEDVIG: Oh, yes, do, father!

HIALMAR (*rising*): Very well then.

GREGERS (*to* GINA): What is it?

GINA: Oh, nothing so very wonderful, after all.

(EKDAL *and* HIALMAR *have gone to the back wall and are each pushing back a side of the sliding door;* HEDVIG *helps the old man;* GREGERS *remains standing by the sofa;* GINA *sits still and sews. Through the open doorway a large, deep irregular garret is seen with odd nooks and corners; a couple of stove-pipes running through it, from rooms below. There are skylights through which clear moonbeams shine in on some parts of the great room; others lie in deep shadow.*)

EKDAL (*to* GREGERS): You may come close up if you like.

GREGERS (*going over to them*): Why, what is it?

EKDAL: Look for yourself. H'm.

HIALMAR (*somewhat embarrassed*): This belongs to father, you understand.

GREGERS (*at the door, looks into the garret*): Why, you keep poultry, Lieutenant Ekdal.

EKDAL: Should think we did keep poultry. They've gone to roost now. But you should just see our fowls by daylight, sir!

HEDVIG: And there's a . . .

EKDAL: Sh—sh! don't say anything about it yet.

GREGERS: And you have pigeons, too, I see.

EKDAL: Oh, yes, haven't we just got pigeons! They have their nest-boxes up there under the roof-tree; for pigeons like to roost high, you see.

HIALMAR: They aren't all common pigeons.

EKDAL: Common! Should think not indeed! We have tumblers and a pair of pouters, too. But come here! Can you see that hutch down there by the wall?

GREGERS: Yes; what do you use it for?

EKDAL: That's where the rabbits sleep, sir.

GREGERS: Dear me; so you have rabbits, too?

EKDAL: Yes, you may take my word for it, we have rabbits! He wants to know if we have rabbits, Hialmar! H'm! But now comes the thing, let me tell you! Here we have it! Move away, Hedvig. Stand here; that's right,—and now look down there.—Don't you see a basket with straw in it?

GREGERS: Yes. And I can see a fowl lying in the basket.

EKDAL: H'm—"a fowl" . . .

GREGERS: Isn't it a duck?

EKDAL (*hurt*): Why, of course it's a duck.

HIALMAR: But what kind of duck, do you think?

HEDVIG: It's not just a common duck . . .

EKDAL: Sh!

GREGERS: And it's not a Muscovy duck either.

EKDAL: No, Mr.—Werle; it's not a Muscovy duck; for it's a wild duck!

GREGERS: Is it really? A wild duck?

EKDAL: Yes, that's what it is. That "fowl" as you call it—is the wild duck. It's our wild duck, sir.

HEDVIG: My wild duck. It belongs to me.

GREGERS: And can it live up here in the garret? Does it thrive?

EKDAL: Of course it has a trough of water to splash about in, you know.

HIALMAR: Fresh water every other day.

GINA (*turning towards* HIALMAR): But my dear Ekdal, it's getting icy cold here.

EKDAL: H'm, we had better shut up then. It's as well not to disturb their night's rest, too. Close up, Hedvig.

(HIALMAR *and* HEDVIG *push the garret doors together.*)

EKDAL: Another time you shall see her properly. (*Seats himself in the armchair by the stove*) Oh, they're curious things, these wild ducks. I can tell you.

GREGERS: How did you manage to catch it, Lieutenant Ekdal?

EKDAL: *I* didn't catch it. There's a certain man in this town whom we have to thank for it.

GREGERS (*starts slightly*): That man was not my father, was he?

EKDAL: You've hit it. Your father and no one else. H'm.

HIALMAR: Strange that you should guess that, Gregers.

GREGERS: You were telling me that you owed so many things to my father; and so I thought perhaps . . .

GINA: But we didn't get the duck from Mr. Werle himself . . .

EKDAL: It's Håkon Werle we have to thank for her, all the same, Gina. (*To* GREGERS) He was shooting from a boat, you see, and he brought her down. But your father's sight is not very good now. H'm; she was only wounded.

GREGERS: Ah! She got a couple of slugs in her body, I suppose.

HIALMAR: Yes, two or three.

HEDVIG: She was hit under the wing, so that she couldn't fly.

GREGERS: And I suppose she dived to the bottom, eh?

EKDAL (*sleepily, in a thick voice*): Of course. Always do that, wild ducks do. They shoot to the bottom as deep as they can get, sir—and bite themselves fast in the tangle and seaweed—and all the devil's own mess that grows down there. And they never come up again.

GREGERS: But your wild duck came up again, Lieutenant Ekdal.

EKDAL: He had such an amazingly clever dog, your father had. And that dog—he dived in after the duck and fetched her up again.

GREGERS (*who has turned to* HIALMAR): And then she was sent to you here?

HIALMAR: Not at once; at first your father took her home. But she wouldn't thrive there; so Pettersen was told to put an end to her . . .

EKDAL (*half asleep*): H'm—yes—Pettersen—that ass . . .

HIALMAR (*speaking more softly*): That was how we got her, you see; for father knows Pettersen a little; and when he heard about the wild duck he got him to hand her over to us.

GREGERS: And now she thrives as well as possible in the garret there?

HIALMAR: Yes, wonderfully well. She has got fat. You see, she has lived in there so long now that she has forgotten her natural wild life; and it all depends on that.

GREGERS: You are right there, Hialmar. Be sure you never let her get a glimpse of the sky and the sea. . . . But I mustn't stay any longer; I think your father is asleep.

HIALMAR: Oh, as for that . . .

GREGERS: But, by-the-bye—you said you had a room to let—a spare room?

HIALMAR: Yes; what then? Do you know of anybody . . . ?

GREGERS: Can I have that room?

HIALMAR: You?

GINA: Oh, no, Mr. Werle, you . . .

GREGERS: May I have the room? If so, I'll take possession first thing tomorrow morning.

HIALMAR: Yes, with the greatest pleasure . . .

GINA: But, Mr. Werle, I'm sure it's not at all the sort of room for you.

HIALMAR: Why, Gina! how can you say that?

GINA: Why, because the room's neither large enough nor light enough, and . . .

GREGERS: That really doesn't matter, Mrs. Ekdal.

HIALMAR: I call it quite a nice room, and not at all badly furnished either.

GINA: But remember the pair of them underneath.

GREGERS: What pair?

GINA: Well, there's one as has been a tutor . . .

HIALMAR: That's Molvik—Mr. Molvik, B.A.

GINA: And then there's a doctor, by the name of Relling.

GREGERS: Relling? I know him a little; he practised for a time up in Höidal.

GINA: They're a regular rackety pair, they are. As often as not, they're out on the loose in the evenings; and then they come home at all hours, and they're not always just . . .

GREGERS: One soon gets used to that sort of thing. I daresay I shall be like the wild duck . . .

GINA: H'm; I think you ought to sleep upon it first, anyway.

GREGERS: You seem very unwilling to have me in the house, Mrs. Ekdal.

GINA: Oh, no! What makes you think that?

HIALMAR: Well, you really behave strangely about it, Gina. (*To* GREGERS) Then I suppose you intend to remain in the town for the present?

GREGERS (*putting on his overcoat*): Yes, now I intend to remain here.

HIALMAR: And yet not at your father's? What do you propose to do, then?

GREGERS: Ah, if I only knew that, Hialmar, I shouldn't be so badly off! But when one has the misfortune to be called Gregers—! "Gregers"—and then "Werle" after it; did you ever hear anything so hideous?

HIALMAR: Oh, I don't think so at all.

GREGERS: Ugh! Bah! I feel I should like to spit upon the fellow that answers to such a name. But when a man is once for all doomed to be Gregers—Werle in this world, as I am . . .

HIALMAR (*laughs*): Ha, ha! If you weren't Gregers Werle, what would you like to be?

GREGERS: If I should choose, I should like best to be a clever dog.

GINA: A dog!

HEDVIG (*involuntarily*): Oh, no!

GREGERS: Yes, an amazingly clever dog; one that goes to the bottom after wild ducks when they dive and bite themselves fast in tangle and sea-weed, down among the ooze.

HIALMAR: Upon my word now, Gregers—I don't in the least know what you're driving at.

GREGERS: Oh, well, you might not be much the wiser if you did. It's understood, then, that I move in early tomorrow morning. (*To*

GINA) I won't give you any trouble; I do everything for myself. (*To* HIALMAR) We can talk about the rest tomorrow.—Good-night, Mrs. Ekdal. (*Nods to* HEDVIG) Good-night.

GINA: Good-night, Mr. Werle.

HEDVIG: Good-night.

HIALMAR (*who has lighted a candle*): Wait a moment; I must show you a light; the stairs are sure to be dark.

(GREGERS *and* HIALMAR *go out by the passage door.*)

GINA (*looking straight before her, with her sewing in her lap*): Wasn't that queer-like talk about wanting to be a dog?

HEDVIG: Do you know, mother—I believe he meant something quite different by that.

GINA: Why, what should he mean?

HEDVIG: Oh, I don't know; but it seemed to me he meant something different from what he said—all the time.

GINA: Do you think so? Yes, it was sort of queer.

HIALMAR (*comes back*): The lamp was still burning. (*Puts out the candle and sets it down*) Ah, now one can get a mouthful of food at last. (*Begins to eat the bread and butter*) Well, you see, Gina—if only you keep your eyes open . . .

GINA: How, keep your eyes open . . . ?

HIALMAR: Why, haven't we at last had the luck to get the room let? And just think—to a person like Gregers—a good old friend.

GINA: Well, I don't know what to say about it.

HEDVIG: Oh, mother, you'll see; it'll be such fun!

HIALMAR: You're very strange. You were so bent upon getting the room let before; and now you don't like it.

GINA: Yes, I do, Ekdal; if it had only been to some one else . . . But what do you suppose Mr. Werle will say?

HIALMAR: Old Werle? It doesn't concern him.

GINA: But surely you can see that there's something amiss between them again, or the young man wouldn't be leaving home. You know very well those two can't get on with each other.

HIALMAR: Very likely not, but . . .

GINA: And now Mr. Werle may fancy it's you that has egged him on . . .

HIALMAR: Let him fancy so, then! Mr. Werle has done a great deal for me; far be it from me to deny it. But that doesn't make me everlastingly dependent upon him.

GINA: But, my dear Ekdal, maybe grandfather'll suffer for it. He may lose the little bit of work he gets from Gråberg.

HIALMAR: I could almost say: so much the better! Is it not humiliating for a man like me to see his grey-haired father treated as a pariah? But now I believe the fulness of time is at hand. (*Takes a fresh piece of bread and butter*) As sure as I have a mission in life, I mean to fulfil it now!

HEDVIG: Oh, yes, father, do!

GINA: Hush! Don't wake him!

HIALMAR (*more softly*): I will fulfil it, I say. The day shall come when . . . And that is why I say it's a good thing we have let the room; for that makes me more independent. The man who has a mission in life must be independent. (*By the armchair, with emotion*) Poor old white-haired father! Rely on your Hialmar. He has broad shoulders—strong shoulders, at any rate. You shall yet wake up some fine day and . . . (*To* GINA) Do you not believe it?

GINA (*rising*): Yes, of course I do; but in the meantime suppose we see about getting him to bed.

HIALMAR: Yes, come.

(*They take hold of the old man carefully.*)

(*The Curtain Falls.*)

Act Three

HIALMAR EKDAL'S *studio. It is morning: the daylight shines through the large window in the slanting roof; the curtain is drawn back.*

HIALMAR *is sitting at the table, busy retouching a photograph; several others lie before him. Presently* GINA, *wearing her hat and cloak, enters by the passage door; she has a covered basket on her arm.*

HIALMAR: Back already, Gina?

GINA: Oh, yes, one can't let the grass grow under one's feet. (*Sets her basket on a chair and takes off her things.*)

HIALMAR: Did you look in at Gregers' room?

GINA: Yes, that I did. It's a rare sight, I can tell you; he's made a pretty mess to start off with.

HIALMAR: How so?

GINA: He was determined to do everything for himself, he said; so he sets to work to light the stove, and what must he do but screw down the damper till the whole room is full of smoke. Ugh! There was a smell fit to . . .

HIALMAR: Well, really!

GINA: But that's not the worst of it; for then he thinks he'll put out the fire, and goes and empties his water-jug into the stove and so makes the whole floor one filthy puddle.

HIALMAR: How annoying!

GINA: I've got the porter's wife to clear up after him, pig that he is! But the room won't be fit to live in till the afternoon.

HIALMAR: What's he doing with himself in the meantime?

GINA: He said he was going out for a little while.

HIALMAR: I looked in upon him, too, for a moment—after you had gone.

GINA: So I heard. You've asked him to lunch.

HIALMAR: Just to a little bit of early lunch, you know. It's his first day—we can hardly do less. You've got something in the house, I suppose?

GINA: I shall have to find something or other.

HIALMAR: And don't cut it too fine, for I fancy Relling and Molvik are coming up, too. I just happened to meet Relling on the stairs, you see; so I had to . . .

GINA: Oh, are we to have those two as well?

HIALMAR: Good Lord—a couple more or less can't make any difference.

OLD EKDAL (*opens his door and looks in*): I say, Hialmar . . . (*Sees* GINA) Oh!

GINA: Do you want anything, grandfather?

EKDAL: Oh, no, it doesn't matter. H'm! (*Retires again.*)

GINA (*takes up the basket*): Be sure you see that he doesn't go out.

HIALMAR: All right, all right. And, Gina, a little herring-salad wouldn't be a bad idea; Relling and Molvik were out on the loose again last night.

GINA: If only they don't come before I'm ready for them . . .

HIALMAR: No, of course they won't; take your own time.

GINA: Very well; and meanwhile you can be working a bit.

HIALMAR: Well, I am working! I am working as hard as I can!

GINA: Then you'll have that job off your hands, you see.

(*She goes out to the kitchen with her basket.* HIALMAR *sits for a time pencilling away at the photograph, in an indolent and listless manner.*)

EKDAL (*peeps in, looks round the studio and says softly*): Are you busy?

HIALMAR: Yes, I'm toiling at these wretched pictures . . .

EKDAL: Well, well, never mind,—since you're so busy— h'm! (*He goes out again; the door stands open.*)

HIALMAR (*continues for some time in silence; then he lays down his brush and goes over to the door*): Are you busy, father?

EKDAL (*in a grumbling tone, within*): If you're busy, I'm busy, too. H'm!

HIALMAR: Oh, very well, then. (*Goes to his work again.*)

EKDAL (*presently, coming to the door again*): H'm; I say, Hialmar, I'm not so very busy, you know.

HIALMAR: I thought you were writing.

EKDAL: Oh, the devil take it! can't Gråberg wait a day or two? After all, it's not a matter of life and death.

HIALMAR: No; and you're not his slave either.

EKDAL: And about that other business in there . . .

HIALMAR: Just what I was thinking of. Do you want to go in? Shall I open the door for you?

EKDAL: Well, it wouldn't be a bad notion.

HIALMAR (*rises*): Then we'd have that off our hands.

EKDAL: Yes, exactly. It's got to be ready first thing tomorrow. It is tomorrow, isn't it? H'm?

HIALMAR: Yes, of course it's tomorrow.

(HIALMAR *and* EKDAL *push aside each his half of the sliding door. The morning sun is shining in through the skylights; some doves are flying about; others sit cooing, upon the perches; the hens are heard clucking now and then, further back in the garret.*)

HIALMAR: There; now you can get to work, father.

EKDAL (*goes in*): Aren't you coming, too?

HIALMAR: Well, really, do you know . . . ; I almost think . . . (*Sees* GINA *at the kitchen door*) I? No; I haven't time; I must work. —But now for our new contrivance . . .

(*He pulls a cord, a curtain slips down inside, the lower part consisting of a piece of old sailcloth, the upper part of a stretched fishing net. The floor of the garret is thus no longer visible.*)

HIALMAR (*goes to the table*): So! Now, perhaps I can sit in peace for a little while.

GINA: Is he rampaging in there again?

HIALMAR: Would you rather have had him slip down to Madam Eriksen's? (*Seats himself*) Do you want anything? You know you said . . .

GINA: I only wanted to ask if you think we can lay the table for lunch here?

HIALMAR: Yes; we have no early appointment, I suppose?

GINA: No, I expect no one today except those two sweethearts that are to be taken together.

HIALMAR: Why the deuce couldn't they be taken together another day!

GINA: Don't you know, I told them to come in the afternoon, when you are having your nap.

HIALMAR: Oh, that's capital. Very well, let us have lunch here then.

GINA: All right; but there's no hurry about laying the cloth; you can have the table for a good while yet.

HIALMAR: Do you think I am not sticking at my work? I'm at it as hard as I can!

GINA: Then you'll be free later on, you know. (*Goes out into the kitchen again. Short pause.*)

EKDAL (*in the garret doorway, behind the net*). Hialmar!

HIALMAR: Well?

EKDAL: Afraid we shall have to move the water-trough, after all.

HIALMAR: What else have I been saying all along?

EKDAL: H'm—h'm—h'm. (*Goes away from the door again.* HIALMAR *goes on working a little; glances towards the garret and half rises.* HEDVIG *comes in from the kitchen.*)

HIALMAR (*sits down again hurriedly*): What do you want?

HEDVIG: I only wanted to come in beside you, father.

HIALMAR (*after a pause*): What makes you go prying around like that? Perhaps you are told off to watch me?

HEDVIG: No, no.

HIALMAR: What is your mother doing out there?

HEDVIG: Oh, mother's in the middle of making the herring-salad. (*Goes to the table*) Isn't there any little thing I could help you with, father?

HIALMAR: Oh, no. It is right that I should bear the whole burden—so long as my strength holds out. Set your mind at rest, Hedvig; if only your father keeps his health . . .

HEDVIG: Oh, no, father! You mustn't talk in that horrid way.

(*She wanders about a little, stops by the doorway and looks into the garret.*)

HIALMAR: Tell me, what is he doing?

HEDVIG: I think he's making a new path to the water-trough.

HIALMAR: He can never manage that by himself! And here am I doomed to sit . . . !

HEDVIG (*goes to him*): Let me take the brush, father; I can do it, quite well.

HIALMAR: Oh, nonsense; you will only hurt your eyes.

HEDVIG: Not a bit. Give me the brush.

HIALMAR (*rising*): Well, it won't take more than a minute or two.

HEDVIG: Pooh, what harm can it do then? (*Takes the brush*) There! (*Seats herself*) I can begin upon this one.

HIALMAR: But mind you don't hurt your eyes! Do you hear? *I* won't be answerable; you do it on your own responsibility—understand that.

HEDVIG (*retouching*): Yes, yes, I understand.

HIALMAR: You are quite clever at it, Hedvig. Only a minute or two, you know.

(*He slips through by the edge of the curtain into the garret.* HEDVIG *sits at her work.* HIALMAR *and* EKDAL *are heard disputing inside.*)

HIALMAR (*appears behind the net*): I say, Hedvig—give me those pincers that are lying on the shelf. And the chisel. (*Turns away inside*) Now you shall see, father. Just let me show you first what I mean!

(HEDVIG *has fetched the required tools from the shelf and hands them to him through the net.*)

HIALMAR: Ah, thanks. I didn't come a moment too soon. (*Goes back from the curtain again; they are heard carpentering and talking inside.* HEDVIG *stands looking in at them. A moment later there is a knock at the passage door; she does not notice it.*)

GREGERS WERLE (*bareheaded, in indoor dress, enters and stops near the door*): H'm . . . !

HEDVIG (*turns and goes towards him*): Good morning. Please come in.

GREGERS: Thank you. (*Looking towards the garret*) You seem to have workpeople in the house.

HEDVIG: No, it is only father and grandfather. I'll tell them you are here.

GREGERS: No, no, don't do that; I would rather wait a little. (*Seats himself on the sofa.*)

HEDVIG: It looks so untidy here . . . (*Begins to clear away the photographs.*)

GREGERS: Oh, don't take them away. Are those prints that have to be finished off?

HEDVIG: Yes, they are a few I was helping father with.

GREGERS: Please don't let me disturb you.

HEDVIG: Oh, no.

(*She gathers the things to her and sits down to work;* GREGERS *looks at her, meanwhile, in silence.*)

GREGERS: Did the wild duck sleep well last night?

HEDVIG: Yes, I think so, thanks.

GREGERS (*turning towards the garret*): It looks quite different by day from what it did last night in the moonlight.

HEDVIG: Yes, it changes ever so much. It looks different in the morning and in the afternoon; and it's different on rainy days from what it is in fine weather.

GREGERS: Have you noticed that?

HEDVIG: Yes, how could I help it?

GREGERS: Are you, too, fond of being in there with the wild duck?

HEDVIG: Yes, when I can manage it . . .

GREGERS: But I suppose you haven't much spare time; you go to school, no doubt.

HEDVIG: No, not now; father is afraid of my hurting my eyes.

GREGERS: Oh; then he reads with you himself?

HEDVIG: Father has promised to read with me; but he has never had time yet.

GREGERS: Then is there nobody else to give you a little help?

HEDVIG: Yes, there is Mr. Molvik; but he is not always exactly—quite . . .

GREGERS: Sober?

HEDVIG: Yes, I suppose that's it!

GREGERS: Why, then you must have any amount of time on your hands. And in there I suppose it is a sort of world by itself?

HEDVIG: Oh, yes, quite. And there are such lots of wonderful things.

GREGERS: Indeed?

HEDVIG: Yes, there are big cupboards full of books; and a great many of the books have pictures in them.

GREGERS: Aha!

HEDVIG: And there's an old bureau with drawers and flaps, and a big clock with figures that go out and in. But the clock isn't going now.

GREGERS: So time has come to a standstill in there— in the wild duck's domain.

HEDVIG: Yes. And then there's an old paint-box and things of that sort; and all the books.

GREGERS: And you read the books, I suppose?

HEDVIG: Oh, yes, when I get the chance. Most of them are English though, and I don't understand English. But then I look at the pictures.—There is one great big book called "Harrison's History of London."* It must be a hundred years old; and there are such heaps of pictures in it. At the beginning there is Death with an hour-glass and a woman. I think that is horrid. But then there are all the other pictures of churches and castles and streets and great ships sailing on the sea.

GREGERS: But tell me, where did all those wonderful things come from?

HEDVIG: Oh, an old sea captain once lived here, and he brought them home with him. They used to call him "The Flying Dutchman." That was curious, because he wasn't a Dutchman at all.

GREGERS: Was he not?

HEDVIG: No. But at last he was drowned at sea; and so he left all those things behind him.

GREGERS: Tell me now—when you are sitting in there looking at the pictures, don't you wish you could travel and see the real world for yourself?

HEDVIG: Oh, no! I mean always to stay at home and help father and mother.

GREGERS: To retouch photographs?

HEDVIG: No, not only that. I should love above everything to learn to engrave pictures like those in the English books.

GREGERS: H'm. What does you father say to that?

* A *New and Universal History of the Cities of London and Westminster*, by Walter Harrison. London, 1775, folio.

HEDVIG: I don't think father likes it; father is strange about such things. Only think, he talks of my learning basket-making and straw-plaiting! But I don't think that would be much good.

GREGERS: Oh, no, I don't think so either.

HEDVIG: But father was right in saying that if I had learnt basket-making I could have made the new basket for the wild duck.

GREGERS: So you could; and it was you that ought to have done it, wasn't it?

HEDVIG: Yes, for it's my wild duck.

GREGERS: Of course it is.

HEDVIG: Yes, it belongs to me. But I lend it to father and grandfather as often as they please.

GREGERS: Indeed? What do they do with it?

HEDVIG: Oh, they look after it, and build places for it, and so on.

GREGERS: I see; for no doubt the wild duck is by far the most distinguished inhabitant of the garret?

HEDVIG: Yes, indeed she is; for she is a real wild fowl, you know. And then she is so much to be pitied; she has no one to care for, poor thing.

GREGERS: She has no family, as the rabbits have . . .

HEDVIG: No. The hens, too, many of them, were chickens together; but she has been taken right away from all her friends. And then there is so much that is strange about the wild duck. Nobody knows her, and nobody knows where she came from either.

GREGERS: And she has been down in the depths of the sea.

HEDVIG (*with a quick glance at him, represses a smile and asks*). Why do you say "the depths of the sea"?

GREGERS: What else should I say?

HEDVIG: You could say "the bottom of the sea."*

* Gregers here uses the old-fashioned expression "havsens bund," while Hedvig would have him use the more commonplace "havets bund" or "havbunden."

GREGERS: Oh, mayn't I just as well say the depths of the sea?

HEDVIG: Yes; but it sounds so strange to me when other people speak of the depths of the sea.

GREGERS: Why so? Tell me why?

HEDVIG: No, I won't; it's so stupid.

GREGERS: Oh, no, I am sure it's not. Do tell me why you smiled.

HEDVIG: Well, this is the reason: whenever I come to realize suddenly —in a flash—what is in there, it always seems to me that the whole room and everything in it should be called "the depths of the sea."— But that is so stupid.

GREGERS: You mustn't say that.

HEDVIG: Oh, yes, for you know it is only a garret.

GREGERS (*looks fixedly at her*): Are you so sure of that?

HEDVIG (*astonished*): That it's a garret?

GREGERS: Are you quite certain of it?

(HEDVIG *is silent, and looks at him open-mouthed.* GINA *comes in from the kitchen with the table things.*)

GREGERS (*rising*): I have come in upon you too early.

GINA: Oh, you must be somewhere; and we're nearly ready now, anyway. Clear the table, Hedvig.

(HEDVIG *clears away her things; she and* GINA *lay the cloth during what follows.* GREGERS *seats himself in the armchair and turns over an album.*)

GREGERS: I hear you can retouch, Mrs. Ekdal.

GINA (*with a side glance*): Yes, I can.

GREGERS: That was exceedingly lucky.

GINA: How—lucky?

GREGERS: Since Ekdal took to photography, I mean.

HEDVIG: Mother can take photographs, too.

GINA: Oh, yes; I was bound to learn that.

GREGERS: So it is really you that carry on the business, I suppose?

GINA: Yes, when Ekdal hasn't time himself . . .

GREGERS: He is a great deal taken up with his old father, I daresay.

GINA: Yes; and then you can't expect a man like Ekdal to do nothing but take car-de-visits of Dick, Tom and Harry.

GREGERS: I quite agree with you; but having once gone in for the thing . . .

GINA: You can surely understand, Mr. Werle, that Ekdal's not like one of your common photographers.

GREGERS: Of course not; but still . . .

(*A shot is fired within the garret.*)

GREGERS (*starting up*): What's that?

GINA: Ugh! now they're firing again!

GREGERS: Have they firearms in there?

HEDVIG: They are out shooting.

GREGERS: What! (*At the door of the garret*) Are you shooting, Hialmar?

HIALMAR (*inside the net*): Are you there? I didn't know; I was so taken up . . . (*To* HEDVIG) Why did you not let us know? (*Comes into the studio.*)

GREGERS: Do you go shooting in the garret?

HIALMAR (*showing a double-barrelled pistol*): Oh, only with this thing.

GINA: Yes, you and grandfather will do yourselves a mischief some day with that there pigstol.

HIALMAR (*with irritation*): I believe I have told you that this kind of firearm is called a pistol.

GINA: Oh, that doesn't make it much better, that I can see.

GREGERS: So you have become a sportsman, too, Hialmar?

HIALMAR: Only a little rabbit-shooting now and then. Mostly to please father, you understand.

GINA: Men are strange beings; they must always have something to pervert theirselves with.

HIALMAR (*snappishly*): Just so; we must always have something to divert ourselves with.

GINA: Yes, that's just what I say.

HIALMAR: H'm (*To* GREGERS) You see the garret is fortunately so situated that no one can hear us shooting. (*Lays the pistol on the top shelf of the bookcase*) Don't touch the pistol, Hedvig! One of the barrels is loaded; remember that.

GREGERS (*looking through the net*): You have a fowling-piece, too, I see.

HIALMAR: That is father's old gun. It's of no use now; something has gone wrong with the lock. But it's fun to have it all the same; for we can take it to pieces now and then, and clean and grease it, and screw it together again.—Of course, it's mostly father that fiddle-faddles with all that sort of thing.

HEDVIG (*beside* GREGERS): Now you can see the wild duck properly.

GREGERS: I was just looking at her. One of her wings seems to me to droop a bit.

HEDVIG: Well, no wonder; her wing was broken, you know.

GREGERS: And she trails one foot a little. Isn't that so?

HIALMAR: Perhaps a very little bit.

HEDVIG: Yes, it was by that foot the dog took hold of her.

HIALMAR: But otherwise she hasn't the least thing the matter with her; and that is simply marvellous for a creature that has a charge of shot in her body and has been between a dog's teeth . . .

GREGERS (*with a glance at* HEDVIG): . . . and that has lain in the depths of the sea—so long.

HEDVIG (*smiling*): Yes.

GINA (*laying the table*): That blessed wild duck! What a lot of fuss you do make over her.

HIALMAR: H'm;—will lunch soon be ready?

GINA: Yes, directly. Hedvig, you must come and help me now.

(GINA *and* HEDVIG *go out into the kitchen.*)

HIALMAR (*in a low voice*): I think you had better not stand there looking in at father; he doesn't like it. (GREGERS *moves away from the garret door.*) Besides, I may as well shut up before the others come. (*Claps his hands to drive the fowls back*) Shh-shh, in with you! (*Draws up the curtain and pulls the doors together*) All the contrivances are my own invention. It's really quite amusing to have things of this sort to potter with and to put to rights when they get out of order. And it's absolutely necessary, too; for Gina objects to having rabbits and fowls in the studio.

GREGERS: To be sure; and I suppose the studio is your wife's special department?

HIALMAR: As a rule, I leave the everyday details of business to her; for then I can take refuge in the parlour and give my mind to more important things.

GREGERS: What things may they be, Hialmar?

HIALMAR: I wonder you have not asked that question sooner. But perhaps you haven't heard of the invention?

GREGERS: The invention? No.

HIALMAR: Really? Have you not? Oh, no, out there in the wilds . . .

GREGERS: So you have invented something, have you?

HIALMAR: It is not quite completed yet; but I am working at it. You can easily imagine that when I resolved to devote myself to photography, it wasn't simply with the idea of taking likenesses of all sorts of commonplace people.

GREGERS: No; your wife was saying the same thing just now.

HIALMAR: I swore that if I consecrated my powers to this handicraft, I would so exalt it that it should become both an art and a science. And to that end I determined to make this great invention.

GREGERS: And what is the nature of the invention? What purpose does it serve?

HIALMAR: Oh, my dear fellow, you mustn't ask for details yet. It takes time, you see. And you must not think that my motive is vanity. It is not for my own sake that I am working. Oh, no; it is my life's mission that stands before me night and day.

GREGERS: What is your life's mission?

HIALMAR: Do you forget the old man with the silver hair?

GREGERS: Your poor father? Well, but what can you do for him?

HIALMAR: I can raise up his self-respect from the dead, by restoring the name of Ekdal to honour and dignity.

GREGERS: Then that is your life's mission?

HIALMAR: Yes. I will rescue the shipwrecked man. For shipwrecked he was, by the very first blast of the storm. Even while those terrible investigations were going on, he was no longer himself. That pistol there—the one we use to shoot rabbits with—has played its part in the tragedy of the house of Ekdal.

GREGERS: The pistol? Indeed?

HIALMAR: When the sentence of imprisonment was passed—he had the pistol in his hand . . .

GREGERS: Had he . . . ?

HIALMAR: Yes; but he dared not use it. His courage failed him. So broken, so demoralized was he even then! Oh, can you understand it? He, a soldier; he, who had shot nine bears, and who was descended from two lieutenant-colonels—one after the other, of course. Can you understand it, Gregers?

GREGERS: Yes, I understand it well enough.

HIALMAR: I cannot. And once more the pistol played a part in the history of our house. When he had put on the grey clothes and was under lock and key—oh, that was a terrible time for me, I can tell you. I kept the blinds drawn down over both my windows. When I peeped out, I saw the sun shining as if nothing had happened. I could not understand it. I saw people going along the street, laughing

and talking about indifferent things. I could not understand it. It seemed to me that the whole of existence must be at a standstill—as if under an eclipse.

GREGERS: I felt that, too, when my mother died.

HIALMAR: It was in such an hour that Hialmar Ekdal pointed the pistol at his own breast.

GREGERS: You, too, thought of . . . !

HIALMAR: Yes.

GREGERS: But you did not fire?

HIALMAR: No. At the decisive moment I won the victory over myself. I remained in life. But I can assure you it takes some courage to choose life under circumstances like those.

GREGERS: Well, that depends on how you look at it.

HIALMAR: Yes, indeed, it takes courage. But I am glad I was firm; for now I shall soon perfect my invention; and Dr. Relling thinks, as I do myself, that father may be allowed to wear his uniform again. I will demand that as my sole reward.

GREGERS: So that is what he meant about his uniform . . . ?

HIALMAR: Yes, that is what he most yearns for. You can't think how my heart bleeds for him. Every time we celebrate any little family festival—Gina's and my wedding-day, or whatever it may be—in comes the old man in the lieutenant's uniform of happier days. But if he only hears a knock at the door—for he daren't show himself to strangers, you know—he hurries back to his room again as fast as his old legs can carry him. Oh, it's heart-rending for a son to see such things!

GREGERS: How long do you think it will take you to finish your invention?

HIALMAR: Come now, you mustn't expect me to enter into particulars like that. An invention is not a thing completely under one's own control. It depends largely on inspiration—on intuition—and it is almost impossible to predict when the inspiration may come.

GREGERS: But it's advancing?

HIALMAR: Yes, certainly, it is advancing. I turn it over in my mind every day; I am full of it. Every afternoon, when I have had my dinner, I shut myself up in the parlour, where I can ponder undisturbed. But I can't be goaded to it; it's not a bit of good; Relling says so, too.

GREGERS: And you don't think that all that business in the garret draws you off and distracts you too much?

HIALMAR: No, no, no; quite the contrary. You mustn't say that. I cannot be everlastingly absorbed in the same laborious train of thought. I must have something alongside of it to fill up the time of waiting. The inspiration, the intuition, you see—when it comes, it comes, and there's an end of it.

GREGERS: My dear Hialmar, I almost think you have something of the wild duck in you.

HIALMAR: Something of the wild duck? How do you mean?

GREGERS: You have dived down and bitten yourself fast in the undergrowth.

HIALMAR: Are you alluding to the well-nigh fatal shot that has broken my father's wing—and mine, too?

GREGERS: Not exactly to that. I don't say that your wing has been broken; but you have strayed into a poisonous marsh, Hialmar; an insidious disease has taken hold of you, and you have sunk down to die in the dark.

HIALMAR: I? To die in the dark? Look here, Gregers, you must really leave off talking such nonsense.

GREGERS: Don't be afraid; I shall find a way to help you up again. I, too, have a mission in life now; I found it yesterday.

HIALMAR: That's all very well; but you will please leave me out of it. I can assure you that—apart from my very natural melancholy, of course—I am as contented as any one can wish to be.

GREGERS: Your contentment is an effect of the marsh poison.

HIALMAR: Now, my dear Gregers, pray do not go on about disease and poison; I am not used to that sort of talk. In my house nobody ever speaks to me about unpleasant things.

GREGERS: Ah, that I can easily believe.

HIALMAR: It's not good for me, you see. And there are no marsh poisons here, as you express it. The poor photographer's roof is lowly, I know—and my circumstances are narrow. But I am an inventor, and I am the breadwinner of a family. That exalts me above my mean surroundings.—Ah, here comes lunch!

(GINA *and* HEDVIG *bring bottles of ale, a decanter of brandy, glasses, etc. At the same time,* RELLING *and* MOLVIK *enter from the passage; they are both without hat or overcoat.* MOLVIK *is dressed in black.*)

GINA (*placing the things upon the table*): Ah, you two have come in the nick of time.

RELLING: Molvik got it into his head that he could smell herring-salad, and then there was no holding him.—Good morning again, Ekdal.

HIALMAR: Gregers, let me introduce you to Mr. Molvik. Doctor . . . Oh, you know Relling, don't you?

GREGERS: Yes, slightly.

RELLING: Oh, Mr. Werle, junior! Yes, we two have had one or two little skirmishes up at the Höidal works. You've just moved in?

GREGERS: I moved in this morning.

RELLING: Molvik and I live right under you; so you haven't far to go for the doctor and the clergyman, if you should need anything in that line.

GREGERS: Thanks, it's not quite unlikely; for yesterday we were thirteen at table.

HIALMAR: Oh, come now, don't let us get upon unpleasant subjects again!

RELLING: You may make your mind easy, Ekdal; I'll be hanged if the finger of fate points to you.

HIALMAR: I should hope not, for the sake of my family. But let us sit down now, and eat and drink and be merry.

GREGERS: Shall we not wait for your father?

HIALMAR: No, his lunch will be taken in to him later. Come along!

(*The men seat themselves at table, and eat and drink.* GINA *and* HEDVIG *go in and out and wait upon them.*)

RELLING: Molvik was frightfully screwed yesterday, Mrs. Ekdal.

GINA: Really? Yesterday again?

RELLING: Didn't you hear him when I brought him home last night?

GINA: No, I can't say I did.

RELLING: That was a good thing, for Molvik was disgusting last night.

GINA: Is that true, Molvik?

MOLVIK: Let us draw a veil over last night's proceedings. That sort of thing is totally foreign to my better self.

RELLING (*to* GREGERS): It comes over him like a sort of possession, and then I have to go out on the loose with him. Mr. Molvik is dæmonic, you see.

GREGERS: Dæmonic?

RELLING: Molvik is dæmonic, yes.

GREGERS: H'm.

RELLING: And dæmonic natures are not made to walk straight through the world; they must meander a little now and then.—Well, so you still stick up there at those horrible grimy works?

GREGERS: I have stuck there until now.

RELLING: And did you ever manage to collect that claim you went about presenting?

GREGERS: Claim? (*Understands him*) Ah, I see.

HIALMAR: Have you been presenting claims, Gregers?

GREGERS: Oh, nonsense.

RELLING: Faith, but he has, though! He went around to all the cottars' cabins presenting something he called "the claim of the ideal."

GREGERS: I was young then.

RELLING: You're right; you were very young. And as for the claim of the ideal—you never got it honoured while *I* was up there.

GREGERS: Nor since either.

RELLING: Ah, then you've learnt to knock a little discount off, I expect.

GREGERS: Never, when I have a true man to deal with.

HIALMAR: No, I should think not, indeed. A little butter, Gina.

RELLING: And a slice of bacon for Molvik.

MOLVIK: Ugh, not bacon! (*A knock at the garret door.*)

HIALMAR: Open the door, Hedvig; father wants to come out.

(HEDVIG *goes and opens the door a little way;* EKDAL *enters with a fresh rabbit-skin; she closes the door after him.*)

EKDAL: Good morning, gentlemen! Good sport today. Shot a big one.

HIALMAR: And you've gone and skinned it without waiting for me . . . !

EKDAL: Salted it, too. It's good tender meat, is rabbit; it's sweet; it tastes like sugar. Good appetite to you, gentlemen. (*Goes into his room.*)

MOLVIK (*rising*): Excuse me . . . ; I can't . . . ; I must get downstairs immediately . . .

RELLING: Drink some soda water, man!

MOLVIK (*hurrying away*): Ugh—ugh! (*Goes out by the passage door.*)

RELLING (*to* HIALMAR): Let us drain a glass to the old hunter.

HIALMAR (*clinks glasses with him*): To the undaunted sportsman who has looked death in the face!

RELLING: To the grey-haired . . . (*Drinks*) By-the-bye, is his hair grey or white?

HIALMAR: Something between the two, I fancy; for that matter, he has very few hairs left of any colour.

RELLING: Well, well, one can get through the world with a wig. After all, you are a happy man, Ekdal; you have your noble mission to labour for . . .

HIALMAR: And I do labour, I can tell you.

RELLING: And then you have your excellent wife, shuffling quietly in and out in her felt slippers, and that see-saw walk of hers, and making everything cosy and comfortable about you.

HIALMAR: Yes, Gina—(*nods to her*)—you are a good helpmate on the path of life.

GINA: Oh, don't sit there cricketizing me.

RELLING: And your Hedvig, too, Ekdal!

HIALMAR (*affected*): The child, yes! The child before everything! Hedvig, come here to me. (*Strokes her hair*) What day is it tomorrow, eh?

HEDVIG (*shaking him*): Oh, no, you're not to say anything, father.

HIALMAR: It cuts me to the heart when I think what a poor affair it will be; only a little festivity in the garret . . .

HEDVIG: Oh, but that's just what I like!

RELLING: Just you wait till the wonderful invention sees the light, Hedvig!

HIALMAR: Yes, indeed—then you shall see . . . ! Hedvig, I have resolved to make your future secure. You shall live in comfort all your days. I will demand—something or other—on your behalf. That shall be the poor inventor's sole reward.

HEDVIG (*whispering, with her arms round his neck*): Oh, you dear, kind father!

RELLING (*to* GREGERS): Come now, don't you find it pleasant, for once in a way, to sit at a well-spread table in a happy family circle?

HIALMAR: Ah, yes, I really prize these social hours.

GREGERS: For my part, I don't thrive in marsh vapours.

RELLING: Marsh vapours?

HIALMAR: Oh, don't begin with that stuff again!

GINA: Goodness knows there's no marsh vapours in this house, Mr. Werle; I give the place a good airing every blessed day.

GREGERS (*leaves the table*): No airing you can give will drive out the taint I mean.

HIALMAR: Taint!

GINA: Yes, what do you say to that, Ekdal!

RELLING: Excuse me—may it not be you yourself that have brought the taint from those mines up there?

GREGERS: It is like you to call what I bring into this house a taint.

RELLING (*goes up to him*): Look here, Mr. Werle, junior: I have a strong suspicion that you are still carrying about that "claim of the ideal" large as life, in your coat-tail pocket.

GREGERS: I carry it in my breast.

RELLING: Well, wherever you carry it, I advise you not to come dunning us with it here, so long as *I* am on the premises.

GREGERS: And if I do so nonetheless?

RELLING: Then you'll go head-foremost down the stairs; now I've warned you.

HIALMAR (*rising*): Oh, but Relling . . . !

GREGERS: Yes, you may turn me out . . .

GINA (*interposing between them*): We can't have that, Relling. But I must say, Mr. Werle, it ill becomes you to talk about vapours and taints, after all the mess you made with your stove. (*A knock at the passage door.*)

HEDVIG: Mother, there's somebody knocking.

HIALMAR: There now, we're going to have a whole lot of people!

GINA: I'll go . . . (*Goes over and opens the door, starts, and draws back*) Oh—oh, dear!

(WERLE, *in a fur coat, advances one step into the room.*)

WERLE: Excuse me; but I think my son is staying here.

GINA (*with a gulp*): Yes.

HIALMAR (*approaching him*): Won't you do us the honour to . . . ?

WERLE: Thank you, I merely wish to speak to my son.

GREGERS: What is it? Here I am.

WERLE: I want a few words with you, in your room.

GREGERS: In my room? Very well . . . (*About to go.*)

GINA: No, no, your room's not in a fit state . . .

WERLE: Well then, out in the passage here; I want to have a few words with you alone.

HIALMAR: You can have them here, sir. Come into the parlour, Relling.

(HIALMAR *and* RELLING *go off to the right.* GINA *takes* HEDVIG *with her into the kitchen.*)

GREGERS (*after a short pause*): Well, now we are alone.

WERLE: From something you let fall last evening, and from your coming to lodge with the Ekdals, I can't help inferring that you intend to make yourself unpleasant to me, in one way or another.

GREGERS: I intend to open Hialmar Ekdal's eyes. He shall see his position as it really is—that is all.

WERLE: Is that the mission in life you spoke of yesterday?

GREGERS: Yes. You have left me no other.

WERLE: Is it I, then, that crippled your mind, Gregers?

GREGERS: You have crippled my whole life. I am not thinking of all that about mother . . . But it's thanks to you that I am continually haunted and harassed by a guilty conscience.

WERLE: Indeed! It is your conscience that troubles you, is it?

GREGERS: I ought to have taken a stand against you when the trap was set for Lieutenant Ekdal. I ought to have cautioned him; for I had a misgiving as to what was in the wind.

WERLE: Yes, that was the time to have spoken.

GREGERS: I did not dare to, I was so cowed and spiritless. I was mortally afraid of you—not only then, but long afterwards.

WERLE: You have got over that fear now, it appears.

GREGERS: Yes, fortunately. The wrong done to old Ekdal, both by me and by —others, can never be undone; but Hialmar I can rescue from all the falsehood and deception that are bringing him to ruin.

WERLE: Do you think that will be doing him a kindness?

GREGERS: I have not the least doubt of it.

WERLE: You think our worthy photographer is the sort of man to appreciate such friendly offices?

GREGERS: Yes, I do.

WERLE: H'm—we shall see.

GREGERS: Besides, if I am to go on living, I must try to find some cure for my sick conscience.

WERLE: It will never be sound. Your conscience has been sickly from childhood. That is a legacy from your mother, Gregers—the only one she left you.

GREGERS (*with a scornful half-smile*): Have you not yet forgiven her for the mistake you made in supposing she would bring you a fortune?

WERLE: Don't let us wander from the point.—Then you hold to your purpose of setting young Ekdal upon what you imagine to be the right scent?

GREGERS: Yes, that is my fixed resolve.

WERLE: Well, in that case I might have spared myself this visit; for, of course, it is useless to ask whether you will return home with me?

GREGERS: Quite useless.

WERLE: And I suppose you won't enter the firm either?

GREGERS: No.

WERLE: Very good. But as I am thinking of marrying again, your share in the property will fall to you at once.*

GREGERS (*quickly*): No, I do not want that.

WERLE: You don't want it?

GREGERS: No, I dare not take it, for conscience' sake.

WERLE (*after a pause*): Are you going up to the works again?

GREGERS: No; I consider myself released from your service.

WERLE: But what are you going to do?

GREGERS: Only to fulfill my mission; nothing more.

WERLE: Well, but afterwards? What are you going to live upon?

GREGERS: I have laid by a little out of my salary.

WERLE: How long will that last?

GREGERS: I think it will last my time.

WERLE: What do you mean?

GREGERS: I shall answer no more questions.

WERLE: Good-bye then, Gregers.

GREGERS: Good-bye (WERLE *goes.*)

HIALMAR (*peeping in*): He's gone, isn't he?

GREGERS: Yes.

(HIALMAR *and* RELLING *enter; also* GINA *and* HEDVIG *from the kitchen.*)

RELLING: That luncheon-party was a failure.

GREGERS: Put on your coat, Hialmar; I want you to come for a long walk with me.

HIALMAR: With pleasure. What was it your father wanted? Had it anything to do with me?

GREGERS: Come along. We must have a talk. I'll go and put on my overcoat. (*Goes out by the passage door.*)

* By Norwegian law, before a widower can marry again, a certain proportion of his property must be settled on his children by his former marriage.

GINA: You shouldn't go out with him, Ekdal.

RELLING: No, don't you do it. Stay where you are.

HIALMAR (*gets his hat and overcoat*): Oh, nonsense! When a friend of my youth feels impelled to open his mind to me in private . . .

RELLING: But devil take it—don't you see that the fellow's mad, cracked, demented!

GINA: There, what did I tell you! His mother before him had crazy fits like that sometimes.

HIALMAR: The more need for a friend's watchful eye. (*To* GINA) Be sure you have dinner ready in good time. Good-bye for the present. (*Goes out by the passage door.*)

RELLING: It's a thousand pities the fellow didn't go to hell through one of the Höidal mines.

GINA: Good Lord! what makes you say that?

RELLING (*muttering*): Oh, I have my own reasons.

GINA: Do you think young Werle is really mad?

RELLING: No, worse luck; he's no madder than most other people. But one disease he has certainly got in his system.

GINA: What is it that's the matter with him?

RELLING: Well, I'll tell you, Mrs. Ekdal. He is suffering from an acute attack of integrity.

GINA: Integrity?

HEDVIG: Is that a kind of disease?

RELLING: Yes, it's a national disease; but it only appears sporadically. (*Nods to* GINA) Thanks for your hospitality. (*He goes out by the passage door.*)

GINA (*moving restlessly to and fro*): Ugh, that Gregers Werle—he was always a wretched creature.

HEDVIG (*standing by the table and looking searchingly at her*): I think all this is very strange.

(*The Curtain Falls.*)

Act Four

HIALMAR EKDAL'S *studio. A photograph has just been taken; a camera with the cloth over it, a pedestal, two chairs, a folding table, etc., are standing out in the room. Afternoon light; the sun is going down; a little later it begins to grow dusk.*

GINA *stands in the passage doorway, with a little box and a wet glass plate in her hand, and is speaking to somebody outside.*

GINA: Yes, certainly. When I make a promise I keep it. The first dozen shall be ready on Monday. Good afternoon.

(*Someone is heard going downstairs.* GINA *shuts the door, slips the plate into the box and puts it into the covered camera.*)

HEDVIG (*comes in from the kitchen*): Are they gone?

GINA (*tidying up*): Yes, thank goodness, I've got rid of them at last.

HEDVIG: But can you imagine why father hasn't come home yet?

GINA: Are you sure he's not down in Relling's room?

HEDVIG: No, he's not; I ran down the kitchen stair just now and asked.

GINA: And his dinner standing and getting cold, too.

HEDVIG: Yes, I can't understand it. Father's always so careful to be home to dinner!

GINA: Oh, he'll be here directly, you'll see.

HEDVIG: I wish he would come; everything seems so queer today

GINA (*calls out*): There he is!

(HIALMAR EKDAL *comes in at the passage door.*)

HEDVIG (*going to him*): Father! Oh, what a time we've been waiting for you!

GINA (*glancing sidelong at him*): You've been out a long time, Ekdal.

HIALMAR (*without looking at her*): Rather long, yes.

(*He takes off his overcoat;* GINA *and* HEDVIG *go to help him; he motions them away.*)

GINA: Perhaps you've had dinner with Werle?

HIALMAR (*hanging up his coat*): No.

GINA (*going towards the kitchen door*): Then I'll bring some in for you.

HIALMAR: No; let the dinner alone. I want nothing to eat.

HEDVIG (*going nearer to him*): Are you not well, father?

HIALMAR: Well? Oh, yes, well enough. We have had a tiring walk, Gregers and I.

GINA: You didn't ought to have gone so far, Ekdal; you're not used to it.

HIALMAR: H'm; there's many a thing a man must get used to in this world. (*Wanders about the room*) Has any one been here whilst I was out?

GINA: Nobody but the two sweethearts.

HIALMAR: No new orders?

GINA: No, not today.

HEDVIG: There will be some tomorrow, father, you'll see.

HIALMAR: I hope there will; for tomorrow I am going to set to work in real earnest.

HEDVIG: Tomorrow! Don't you remember what day it is tomorrow?

HIALMAR: Oh, yes, by-the-bye. . . . Well, the day after, then. Henceforth I mean to do everything myself; I shall take all the work into my own hands.

GINA: Why, what can be the good of that, Ekdal? It'll only make your life a burden to you. I can manage the photography all right; and you can go on working at your invention.

HEDVIG: And think of the wild duck, father,—and all the hens and rabbits and . . . !

HIALMAR: Don't talk to me of all that trash! From tomorrow I will never set foot in the garret again.

HEDVIG: Oh, but father, you promised that we should have a little party . . .

HIALMAR: H'm, true. Well, then, from the day after tomorrow. I should almost like to wring that cursed wild duck's neck!

HEDVIG (*shrieks*): The wild duck!

GINA: Well, I never!

HEDVIG (*shaking him*): Oh, no, father; you know it's my wild duck!

HIALMAR: That is why I don't do it. I haven't the heart to—for your sake, Hedvig. But in my inmost soul I feel that I ought to do it. I ought not to tolerate under my roof a creature that has been through those hands.

GINA: Why, good gracious, even if grandfather did get it from that poor creature, Pettersen . . .

HIALMAR (*wandering about*): There are certain claims—what shall I call them?—let me say claims of the ideal—certain obligations, which a man cannot disregard without injury to his soul.

HEDVIG (*going after him*): But think of the wild duck,—the poor wild duck!

HIALMAR (*stops*): I tell you I will spare it—for your sake. Not a hair of its head shall be—I mean, it shall be spared. There are greater problems than that to be dealt with. But you should go out a little now, Hedvig, as usual; it is getting dusk enough for you now.

HEDVIG: No, I don't care about going out now.

HIALMAR: Yes, do; it seems to me your eyes are blinking a great deal; all these vapours in here are bad for you. The air is heavy under this roof.

HEDVIG: Very well, then, I'll run down the kitchen stair and go for a little walk. My cloak and hat?—oh, they're in my own room. Father—be sure you don't do the wild duck any harm whilst I'm out.

HIALMAR: Not a feather of its head shall be touched. (*Draws her to him*) You and I, Hedvig—we two . . . ! Well, go along.

(HEDVIG *nods to her parents and goes out through the kitchen.*)

HIALMAR (*walks about without looking up*): Gina.

GINA: Yes?

HIALMAR: From tomorrow—or, say, from the day after tomorrow —I should like to keep the household account-book myself.

GINA: Do you want to keep the accounts, too, now?

HIALMAR: Yes; or to check the receipts at any rate.

GINA: Lord help us! that's soon done.

HIALMAR: One would hardly think so; at any rate, you seem to make the money go a very long way. (*Stops and looks at her*) How do you manage it?

GINA: It's because me and Hedvig, we need so little.

HIALMAR: Is it the case that father is very liberally paid for the copying he does for Mr. Werle?

GINA: I don't know as he gets anything out of the way. I don't know the rates for that sort of work.

HIALMAR: Well, what does he get, about? Let me hear!

GINA: Oh, it varies; I daresay it'll come to about as much as he costs us, with a little pocket-money over.

HIALMAR: As much as he costs us! And you have never told me this before!

GINA: No, how could I tell you? It pleased you so much to think he got everything from you.

HIALMAR: And he gets it from Mr. Werle.

GINA: Oh, well, he has plenty and to spare, he has.

HIALMAR: Light the lamp for me, please!

GINA (*lighting the lamp*): And, of course, we don't know as it's Mr. Werle himself; it may be Gråberg . . .

HIALMAR: Why attempt such an evasion?

GINA: I don't know; I only thought . . .

HIALMAR: H'm.

GINA: It wasn't me that got grandfather that copying. It was Bertha, when she used to come about us.

HIALMAR: It seems to me your voice is trembling.

GINA (*putting the lamp-shade on*): Is it?

HIALMAR: And your hands are shaking, are they not?

GINA (*firmly*): Come right out with it, Ekdal. What has he been saying about me?

HIALMAR: Is it true—can it be true that—that there was an—an understanding between you and Mr. Werle, while you were in service there?

GINA: That's not true. Not at that time. Mr. Werle did come after me, that's a fact. And his wife thought there was something in it, and then she made such a hocus-pocus and hurly-burly, and she hustled me and bustled me about so, that I left her service.

HIALMAR: But afterwards, then?

GINA: Well, then I went home. And mother—well, she wasn't the woman you took her for, Ekdal; she kept on worrying and worrying at me about one thing and another—for Mr. Werle was a widower by that time.

HIALMAR: Well, and then?

GINA: I suppose you've got to know it. He gave me no peace until he'd had his way.

HIALMAR (*striking his hands together*): And this is the mother of my child! How could you hide this from me?

GINA: Yes, it was wrong of me; I ought certainly to have told you long ago.

HIALMAR: You should have told me at the very first;—then I should have known the sort of woman you were.

GINA: But would you have married me all the same?

HIALMAR: How can you dream that I would?

GINA: That's just why I didn't dare tell you anything, then. For I'd come to care for you so much, you see; and I couldn't go and make myself utterly miserable . . .

HIALMAR (*walks about*): And this is my Hedvig's mother. And to know that all I see before me—(*kicks a chair*)—all that I call my home—I owe to a favoured predecessor! Oh, that scoundrel Werle!

GINA: Do you repent of the fourteen—the fifteen years we've lived together?

HIALMAR (*placing himself in front of her*): Have you not every day, every hour, repented of the spider's-web of deceit you have spun around me? Answer me that! How could you help writhing with penitence and remorse?

GINA: Oh, my dear Ekdal, I've had all I could do to look after the house and get through the day's work . . .

HIALMAR: Then you never think of reviewing your past?

GINA: No; Heaven knows I'd almost forgotten those old stories.

HIALMAR: Oh, this dull, callous contentment! To me there is something revolting about it. Think of it—never so much as a twinge of remorse!

GINA: But tell me, Ekdal—what would have become of you if you hadn't had a wife like me?

HIALMAR: Like you . . . !

GINA: Yes; for you know I've always been a bit more practical and wide-awake than you. Of course I'm a year or two older.

HIALMAR: What would have become of me!

GINA: You'd got into all sorts of bad ways when first you met me; that you can't deny.

HIALMAR: "Bad ways" do you call them? Little do you know what a man goes through when he is in grief and despair—especially a man of my fiery temperament.

GINA: Well, well, that may be so. And I've no reason to crow over you, neither; for you turned a moral of a husband, that you did, as soon as ever you had a house and home of your own.—And now we'd got everything so nice and cosy about us; and me and Hedvig was just thinking we'd soon be able to let ourselves go a bit, in the way of both food and clothes.

HIALMAR: In the swamp of deceit, yes.

GINA: I wish to goodness that detestable thing had never set his foot inside our doors!

HIALMAR: And I, too, thought my home such a pleasant one. That was a delusion. Where shall I now find the elasticity of spirit to bring my invention into the world of reality? Perhaps it will die with me; and then it will be your past, Gina, that will have killed it.

GINA (*nearly crying*): You mustn't say such things, Ekdal. Me, that has only wanted to do the best I could for you, all my days!

HIALMAR: I ask you, what becomes of the breadwinner's dream? When I used to lie in there on the sofa and brood over my invention, I had a clear enough presentiment that it would sap my vitality to the last drop. I felt even then that the day when I held the patent in my hand—that day—would bring my—release. And then it was my dream that you should live on after me, the dead inventor's well-to-do widow.

GINA (*drying her tears*): No, you mustn't talk like that, Ekdal. May the Lord never let me see the day I am left a widow!

HIALMAR: Oh, the whole dream has vanished. It is all over now. All over!

(GREGERS WERLE *opens the passage door cautiously and looks in.*)

GREGERS: May I come in?

HIALMAR: Yes, come in.

GREGERS (*comes forward, his face beaming with satisfaction, and holds out both his hands to them*): Well, dear friends . . . ! (*Looks from one to the other and whispers to* HIALMAR) Have you not done it yet?

HIALMAR (*aloud*): It is done.

GREGERS: It is?

HIALMAR: I have passed through the bitterest moments of my life.

GREGERS: But also, I trust, the most ennobling.

HIALMAR: Well, at any rate, we have got through it for the present.

GINA: God forgive you, Mr. Werle.

GREGERS (*in great surprise*): But I don't understand this.

HIALMAR: What don't you understand?

GREGERS: After so great a crisis—a crisis that is to be the starting-point of an entirely new life—of a communion founded on truth and free from all taint of deception . . .

HIALMAR: Yes, yes, I know; I know that quite well.

GREGERS: I confidently expected, when I entered the room, to find the light of transfiguration shining upon me from both husband and wife. And now I see nothing but dulness, oppression, gloom . . .

GINA: Oh, is that it? (*Takes off the lamp-shade.*)

GREGERS: You will not understand me, Mrs. Ekdal. Ah, well, you, I suppose, need time to. . . . But you, Hialmar? Surely you feel a new consecration after the great crisis.

HIALMAR: Yes, of course I do. That is—in a sort of way.

GREGERS: For surely nothing in the world can compare with the joy of forgiving one who has erred and raising her up to oneself in love.

HIALMAR: Do you think a man can so easily throw off the bitter cup I have drained?

GREGERS: No, not a common man, perhaps. But a man like you . . . !

HIALMAR: Good God! I know that well enough. But you must keep me up to it, Gregers. It takes time, you know.

GREGERS: You have much of the wild duck in you, Hialmar. (RELLING *has come in at the passage door.*)

RELLING: Oho! is the wild duck to the fore again?

HIALMAR: Yes; Mr. Werle's wing-broken victim.

RELLING: Mr. Werle's . . . ? So it's him you are talking about?

HIALMAR: Him and—ourselves.

RELLING (*in an undertone to* GREGERS): May the devil fly away with you!

HIALMAR: What is that you are saying?

RELLING: Only uttering a heartfelt wish that this quack-salver would take himself off. If he stays here, he is quite equal to making an utter mess of life, for both of you.

GREGERS: These two will not make a mess of life, Mr. Relling. Of course I won't speak of Hialmar—him we know. But she, too, in her innermost heart, has certainly something loyal and sincere . . .

GINA (*almost crying*): You might have let me alone for what I was, then.

RELLING (*to* GREGERS): Is it rude to ask what you really want in this house?

GREGERS: To lay the foundations of a true marriage.

RELLING: So you don't think Ekdal's marriage is good enough as it is?

GREGERS: No doubt it is as good a marriage as most others, worse luck. But a true marriage it has yet to become.

HIALMAR: You have never had eyes for the claims of the ideal, Relling.

RELLING: Rubbish, my boy!—but excuse me, Mr. Werle: how many—in round numbers—how many true marriages have you seen in the course of your life?

GREGERS: Scarcely a single one.

RELLING: Nor I either.

GREGERS: But I have seen innumerable marriages of the opposite kind. And it has been my fate to see at close quarters what ruin such a marriage can work in two human souls.

HIALMAR: A man's whole moral basis may give away beneath his feet; that is the terrible part of it.

RELLING: Well, I can't say I've ever been exactly married, so I don't pretend to speak with authority. But this I know, that the child enters into the marriage problem. And you must leave the child in peace.

HIALMAR: Oh—Hedvig! my poor Hedvig!

RELLING: Yes, you must be good enough to keep Hedvig outside of all this. You two are grown-up people; you are free, in God's name, to make what mess and muddle you please of your life. But you must deal cautiously with Hedvig, I tell you; else you may do her a great injury.

HIALMAR: An injury!

RELLING: Yes, or she may do herself an injury—and perhaps others, too.

GINA: How can you know that, Relling?

HIALMAR: Her sight is in no immediate danger, is it?

RELLING: I am not talking about her sight. Hedvig is at a critical age. She may be getting all sorts of mischief into her head.

GINA: That's true—I've noticed it already! She's taken to carrying on with the fire, out in the kitchen. She calls it playing at house-on-fire. I'm often scared for fear she really sets fire to the house.

RELLING: You see; I thought as much.

GREGERS (*to* RELLING): But how do you account for that?

RELLING (*sullenly*): Her constitution's changing, sir.

HIALMAR: So long as the child has me . . . ! So long as *I* am above ground . . . ! (*A knock at the door.*)

GINA: Hush, Ekdal; there's some one in the passage. (*Calls out*) Come in!

(MRS. SÖRBY, *in walking dress, comes in.*)

MRS. SÖRBY: Good evening.

GINA (*going towards her*): Is it really you, Bertha?

MRS. SÖRBY: Yes, of course it is. But I'm disturbing you, I'm afraid?

HIALMAR: No, not at all; an emissary from that house . . .

MRS. SÖRBY (*to* GINA): To tell the truth, I hoped your men-folk would be out at this time. I just ran up to have a little chat with you, and to say good-bye.

GINA: Good-bye? Are you going away, then?

MRS. SÖRBY: Yes, tomorrow morning,—up to Höidal. Mr. Werle started this afternoon. (*Lightly to* GREGERS) He asked me to say good-bye for him.

GINA: Only fancy . . . !

HIALMAR: So Mr. Werle has gone? And now you are going after him?

MRS. SÖRBY: Yes, what do you say to that, Ekdal?

HIALMAR: I say: beware!

GREGERS: I must explain the situation. My father and Mrs. Sörby are going to be married.

HIALMAR: Going to be married!

GINA: Oh, Bertha! So it's come to that at last!

RELLING (*his voice quivering a little*): This is surely not true?

MRS. SÖRBY: Yes, my dear Relling, it's true enough.

RELLING: You are going to marry again?

MRS. SÖRBY: Yes, it looks like it. Werle has got a special license, and we are going to be married quite quietly, up at the works.

GREGERS: Then I must wish you all happiness, like a dutiful stepson.

MRS. SÖRBY: Thank you very much—if you mean what you say. I certainly hope it will lead to happiness, both for Werle and for me.

RELLING: You have every reason to hope that. Mr. Werle never gets drunk—so far as I know; and I don't suppose he's in the habit of thrashing his wives, like the late lamented horse-doctor.

MRS. SÖRBY: Come now, let Sörby rest in peace. He had his good points, too.

RELLING: Mr. Werle has better ones, I have no doubt.

MRS. SÖRBY: He hasn't frittered away all that was good in him, at any rate. The man who does that must take the consequences.

RELLING: I shall go out with Molvik this evening.

MRS. SÖRBY: You mustn't do that, Relling. Don't do it—for my sake.

RELLING: There's nothing else for it. (*To* HIALMAR) If you're going with us, come along.

GINA: No, thank you. Ekdal doesn't go in for that sort of dissertation.

HIALMAR (*half aloud, in vexation*): Oh, do hold your tongue!

RELLING: Good-bye, Mrs.—Werle. (*Goes out through the passage door.*)

GREGERS (*to* MRS. SÖRBY): You seem to know Dr. Relling pretty intimately.

MRS. SÖRBY: Yes, we have known each other for many years. At one time it seemed as if things might have gone further between us.

GREGERS: It was surely lucky for you that they did not.

MRS. SÖRBY: You may well say that. But I have always been wary of acting on impulse. A woman can't afford absolutely to throw herself away.

GREGERS: Are you not in the least afraid that I may let my father know about this old friendship?

MRS. SÖRBY: Why, of course, I have told him all about it myself.

GREGERS: Indeed?

MRS. SÖRBY: Your father knows every single thing that can, with any truth, be said about me. I have told him all; it was the first thing I did when I saw what was in his mind.

GREGERS: Then you have been franker than most people, I think.

MRS. SÖRBY: I have always been frank. We women find that the best policy.

HIALMAR: What do you say to that, Gina?

GINA: Oh, we're not all alike, us women aren't. Some are made one way, some another.

MRS. SÖRBY: Well, for my part, Gina, I believe it's wisest to do as I've done. And Werle has no secrets either, on his side. That's really the great bond between us, you see. Now he can talk to me as openly as a child. He has never had the chance to do that before. Fancy a man like him, full of health and vigour, passing his whole youth and the best years of his life in listening to nothing but penitential sermons! And very often the sermons had for their text the most imaginary offenses—at least so I understand.

GINA: That's true enough.

GREGERS: If you ladies are going to follow up this topic, I had better withdraw.

MRS. SÖRBY: You can stay as far as that's concerned. I shan't say a word more. But I wanted you to know that I had done nothing secretly or in an underhand way. I may seem to have come in for a great piece of luck; and so I have, in a sense. But after all, I don't think I am getting any more than I am giving. I shall stand by him always, and I can tend and care for him as no one else can, now that he is getting helpless.

HIALMAR: Getting helpless?

GREGERS (*to* MRS. SÖRBY): Hush, don't speak of that here.

MRS. SÖRBY: There is no disguising it any longer, however much he would like to. He is going blind.

HIALMAR (*starts*): Going blind? That's strange. He, too, going blind!

GINA: Lots of people do.

MRS. SÖRBY: And you can imagine what that means to a business man. Well, I shall try as well as I can to make my eyes take the place of his. But I mustn't stay any longer; I have such heaps of things to do. —Oh, by-the-bye, Ekdal, I was to tell you that if there is anything Werle can do for you, you must just apply to Gråberg.

GREGERS: That offer I am sure Hialmar Ekdal will decline with thanks.

MRS. SÖRBY: Indeed? I don't think he used to be so . . .

GINA: No, Bertha, Ekdal doesn't need anything from Mr. Werle now.

HIALMAR (*slowly, and with emphasis*): Will you present my compliments to your future husband and say that I intend very shortly to call upon Mr. Gråberg . . .

GREGERS: What! You don't really mean that?

HIALMAR: To call upon Mr. Gråberg, I say, and obtain an account of the sum I owe his principal. I will pay that debt of honour—ha ha ha! a debt of honour, let us call it! In any case, I will pay the whole with five per cent. interest.

GINA: But, my dear Ekdal, God knows we haven't got the money to do it.

HIALMAR: Be good enough to tell your future husband that I am working assiduously at my invention. Please tell him that what sustains me in this laborious task is the wish to free myself from a torturing burden of debt. That is my reason for proceeding with the invention. The entire profits shall be devoted to releasing me from my pecuniary obligations to your future husband.

MRS. SÖRBY: Something has happened here.

HIALMAR: Yes, you are right.

MRS. SÖRBY: Well, good-bye. I had something else to speak to you about, Gina; but it must keep till another time. Good-bye.

(HIALMAR *and* GREGERS *bow silently*. GINA *follows* MRS. SÖRBY *to the door.*)

HIALMAR: Not beyond the threshold, Gina!

(MRS. SÖRBY *goes;* GINA *shuts the door after her.*)

HIALMAR: There now Gregers, I have got that burden of debt off my mind.

GREGERS: You soon will, at all events.

HIALMAR: I think my attitude may be called correct.

GREGERS: You are the man I have always taken you for.

HIALMAR: In certain cases, it is impossible to disregard the claim of the ideal. Yet, as the breadwinner of a family, I cannot but writhe and groan under it. I can tell you it is no joke for a man without capital to attempt the repayment of a long-standing obligation, over which, so to speak, the dust of oblivion had gathered. But it cannot be helped: the Man in me demands his rights.

GREGERS (*laying his hand on* HIALMAR'S *shoulder*): My dear Hialmar —was it not a good thing I came?

HIALMAR: Yes.

GREGERS: Are you not glad to have had your true position made clear to you?

HIALMAR (*somewhat impatiently*): Yes, of course I am. But there is one thing that is revolting to my sense of justice.

GREGERS: And what is that?

HIALMAR: It is that—but I don't know whether I ought to express myself so unreservedly about your father.

GREGERS: Say what you please, so far as I am concerned.

HIALMAR: Well, then, is it not exasperating to think that it is not I, but he, who will realize the true marriage?

GREGERS: How can you say such a thing?

HIALMAR: Because it is clearly the case. Isn't the marriage between your father and Mrs. Sörby founded upon complete confidence, upon entire and unreserved candour on both sides? They hide nothing from each other, they keep no secrets in the background; their relation is based, if I may put it so, on mutual confession and absolution.

GREGERS: Well, what then?

HIALMAR: Well, is not that the whole thing? Did you not yourself say that this was precisely the difficulty that had to be overcome in order to found a true marriage?

GREGERS: But this is a totally different matter, Hialmar. You surely don't compare either yourself or your wife with those two . . . ? Oh, you understand me well enough.

HIALMAR: Say what you like, there is something in all this that hurts and offends my sense of justice. It really looks as if there were no just providence to rule the world.

GINA: Oh, no, Ekdal; for God's sake don't say such things.

GREGERS: H'm; don't let us get upon those questions.

HIALMAR: And yet, after all, I cannot but recognize the guiding finger of fate. He is going blind.

GINA: Oh, you can't be sure of that.

HIALMAR: There is no doubt about it. At all events there ought not to be; for in that very fact lies the righteous retribution. He has hoodwinked a confiding fellow creature in days gone by . . .

GREGERS: I fear he has hoodwinked many.

HIALMAR: And now comes inexorable, mysterious Fate and demands Werle's own eyes.

GINA: Oh, how dare you say such dreadful things! You make me quite scared.

HIALMAR: It is profitable, now and then, to plunge deep into the night side of existence.

(HEDVIG, *in her hat and cloak, comes in by the passage door. She is pleasurably excited and out of breath.*)

GINA: Are you back already?

HEDVIG: Yes, I didn't care to go any farther. It was a good thing, too; for I've just met some one at the door.

HIALMAR: It must have been that Mrs. Sörby.

HEDVIG: Yes.

HIALMAR (*walks up and down*): I hope you have seen her for the last time.

(*Silence*, HEDVIG, *discouraged, looks first at one and then at the other, trying to divine their frame of mind.*)

HEDVIG (*approaching, coaxingly*): Father.

HIALMAR: Well—what is it, Hedvig?

HEDVIG: Mrs. Sörby had something with her for me.

HIALMAR (*stops*): For you?

HEDVIG: Yes, something for tomorrow.

GINA: Bertha has always given you some little thing on your birthday.

HIALMAR: What is it?

HEDVIG: Oh, you mustn't see it now. Mother is to give it to me tomorrow morning before I'm up.

HIALMAR: What is all this hocus-pocus that I am to be in the dark about!

HEDVIG (*quickly*): Oh, no, you may see it if you like. It's a big letter. (*Takes the letter out of her cloak pocket.*)

HIALMAR: A letter, too?

HEDVIG: Yes, it is only a letter. The rest will come afterwards, I suppose. But fancy—a letter! I've never had a letter before. And there's "Miss" written upon it. (*Reads*) "Miss Hedvig Ekdal." Only fancy —that's me!

HIALMAR: Let me see that letter.

HEDVIG (*hands it to him*): There it is.

HIALMAR: That is Mr. Werle's hand.

GINA: Are you sure of that, Ekdal?

HIALMAR: Look for yourself.

GINA: Oh, what do *I* know about such-like things?

HIALMAR: Hedvig, may I open the letter—and read it?

HEDVIG: Yes, of course you may, if you want to.

GINA: No, not tonight, Ekdal; it's to be kept till tomorrow.

HEDVIG (*softly*): Oh can't you let him read it! It's sure to be something good; and then father will be glad, and everything will be nice again.

HIALMAR: I may open it, then?

HEDVIG: Yes, do, father. I'm so anxious to know what it is.

HIALMAR: Well and good. (*Opens the letter, takes out a paper, reads it through and appears bewildered*) What is this . . . !

GINA: What does it say?

HEDVIG: Oh, yes, father—tell us!

HIALMAR: Be quiet. (*Reads it through again; he has turned pale, but says with self-control:*) It is a deed of gift, Hedvig.

HEDVIG: Is it? What sort of gift am I to have?

HIALMAR: Read for yourself.

(HEDVIG *goes over and reads for a time by the lamp.*)

HIALMAR (*half-aloud, clenching his hands*): The eyes! The eyes—and then that letter!

HEDVIG (*leaves off reading*): Yes, but it seems to me that it's grandfather that's to have it.

HIALMAR (*takes letter from her*): Gina—can you understand this?

GINA: I know nothing whatever about it; tell me what's the matter.

HIALMAR: Mr. Werle writes to Hedvig that her old grandfather need not trouble himself any longer with the copying, but that he can henceforth draw on the office for a hundred crowns a month . . .

GREGERS: Aha!

HEDVIG: A hundred crowns, mother! I read that.

GINA: What a good thing for grandfather!

HIALMAR: . . . a hundred crowns a month so long as he needs it—that means, of course, so long as he lives.

GINA: Well, so he's provided for, poor dear.

HIALMAR: But there is more to come. You didn't read that, Hedvig. Afterwards this gift is to pass on to you.

HEDVIG: To me! The whole of it?

HIALMAR: He says that the same amount is assured to you for the whole of your life. Do you hear that, Gina?

GINA: Yes, I hear.

HEDVIG: Fancy—all that money for me! (*Shakes him*) Father, father, aren't you glad . . . ?

HIALMAR (*eluding her*): Glad! (*Walks about*) Oh what vistas—what perspectives open up before me! It is Hedvig, Hedvig that he showers these benefactions upon!

GINA: Yes, because it's Hedvig's birthday . . .

HEDVIG: And you'll get it all the same, father! You know quite well I shall give all the money to you and mother.

HIALMAR: To mother, yes! There we have it.

GREGERS: Hialmar, this is a trap he is setting for you.

HIALMAR: Do you think it's another trap?

GREGERS: When he was here this morning he said: Hialmar Ekdal is not the man you imagine him to be.

HIALMAR: Not the man . . . !

GREGERS: That you shall see, he said.

HIALMAR: He meant you should see that I would let myself be bought off . . . !

HEDVIG: Oh, mother, what does all this mean?

GINA: Go and take off your things.

(HEDVIG *goes out by the kitchen door, half-crying.*)

GREGERS: Yes, Hialmar—now is the time to show who was right, he or I.

HIALMAR (*slowly tears the paper across, lays both pieces on the table and says*): Here is my answer.

GREGERS: Just what I expected.

HIALMAR (*goes over to* GINA, *who stands by the stove, and says in a low voice*): Now please make a clean breast of it. If the connection between you and him was quite over when you—came to care for me, as you call it—why did he place us in a position to marry?

GINA: I suppose he thought as he could come and go in our house.

HIALMAR: Only that? Was not he afraid of a possible contingency?

GINA: I don't know what you mean.

HIALMAR: I want to know whether—your child has the right to live under my roof.

GINA (*draws herself up; her eyes flash*): You ask that!

HIALMAR: You shall answer me this one question: Does Hedvig belong to me—or. . . ? Well!

GINA (*looking at him with cold defiance*): I don't know.

HIALMAR (*quivering a little*): You don't know!

GINA: How should *I* know. A creature like me . . .

HIALMAR (*quietly turning away from her*): Then I have nothing more to do in this house.

GREGERS: Take care, Hialmar! Think what you are doing!

HIALMAR (*puts on his overcoat*): In this case, there is nothing for a man like me to think twice about.

GREGERS: Yes, indeed, there are endless things to be considered. You three must be together if you are to attain the true frame of mind for self-sacrifice and forgiveness.

HIALMAR: I don't want to attain it. Never, never! My hat! (*Takes his hat*) My home has fallen in ruins about me. (*Bursts into tears*) Gregers, I have no child!

HEDVIG (*who has opened the kitchen door*): What is that you're saying? (*Coming to him*) Father, father!

GINA: There, you see!

HIALMAR: Don't come near me, Hedvig! Keep far away. I cannot bear to see you. Oh! those eyes . . . ! Good-bye. (*Makes for the door.*)

HEDVIG (*clinging close to him and screaming loudly*): No! no! Don't leave me!

GINA (*cries out*): Look at the child, Ekdal! Look at the child!

HIALMAR: I will not! I cannot! I must get out—away from all this!

(*He tears himself away from* HEDVIG *and goes out by the passage door.*)

HEDVIG (*with despairing eyes*): He is going away from us, mother! He is going away from us! He will never come back again!

GINA: Don't cry, Hedvig. Father's sure to come back again.

HEDVIG (*throws herself sobbing on the sofa*): No, no, he'll never come home to us any more.

GREGERS: Do you believe I meant all for the best, Mrs. Ekdal?

GINA: Yes, I daresay you did; but God forgive you, all the same.

HEDVIG (*lying on the sofa*): Oh, this will kill me! What have I done to him? Mother, you must fetch him home again!

GINA: Yes, yes, yes; only be quiet, and I'll go out and look for him. (*Puts on her outdoor things*) Perhaps he's gone in to Relling's. But you mustn't lie there and cry. Promise me!

HEDVIG (*weeping convulsively*): Yes, I'll stop, I'll stop; if only father comes back!

GREGERS (*to Gina, who is going*): After all, had you not better leave him to fight out his bitter fight to the end?

GINA: Oh, he can do that afterwards. First of all, we must get the child quieted. (*Goes out by the passage door.*)

HEDVIG (*sits up and dries her tears*): Now you must tell me what all this means. Why doesn't father want me any more?

GREGERS: You mustn't ask that till you are a big girl—quite grown-up.

HEDVIG (*sobs*): But I can't go on being as miserable as this till I'm grown-up.—I think I know what it is.—Perhaps I'm not really father's child.

GREGERS (*uneasily*): How could that be?

HEDVIG: Mother might have found me. And perhaps father has just got to know it; I've read of such things.

GREGERS: Well, but if it were so . . .

HEDVIG: I think he might be just as fond of me for all that. Yes, fonder almost. We got the wild duck in a present, you know, and I love it so dearly all the same.

GREGERS (*turning the conversation*): Ah, the wild duck, by-the-bye! Let us talk about the wild duck a little, Hedvig.

HEDVIG: The poor wild duck! He doesn't want to see it any more either. Only think, he wanted to wring its neck!

GREGERS: Oh, he won't do that.

HEDVIG: No; but he said he would like to. And I think it was horrid of father to say it; for I pray for the wild duck every night and ask that it may be preserved from death and all that is evil.

GREGERS (*looking at her*): Do you say your prayers every night?

HEDVIG: Yes.

GREGERS: Who taught you to do that?

HEDVIG: I myself; one time when father was very ill, and had leeches on his neck and said that death was staring him in the face.

GREGERS: Well?

HEDVIG: Then I prayed for him as I lay in bed; and since then I have always kept it up.

GREGERS: And now you pray for the wild duck, too?

HEDVIG: I thought it was best to bring in the wild duck; for she was so weakly at first.

GREGERS: Do you pray in the morning, too?

HEDVIG: No, of course not.

GREGERS: Why not in the morning as well?

HEDVIG: In the morning it's light, you know, and there's nothing in particular to be afraid of.

GREGERS: And your father was going to wring the neck of the wild duck that you love so dearly?

HEDVIG: No; he said he ought to wring its neck, but he would spare it for my sake; and that was kind of father.

GREGERS (*coming a little nearer*): But suppose you were to sacrifice the wild duck of your own free will for his sake.

HEDVIG (*rising*): The wild duck!

GREGERS: Suppose you were to make a free-will offering, for his sake, of the dearest treasure you have in the world!

HEDVIG: Do you think that would do any good?

GREGERS: Try it, Hedvig.

HEDVIG (*softly, with flashing eyes*): Yes, I will try it.

GREGERS: Have you really the courage for it, do you think?

HEDVIG: I'll ask grandfather to shoot the wild duck for me.

GREGERS: Yes, do. But not a word to your mother about it.

HEDVIG: Why not?

GREGERS: She doesn't understand us.

HEDVIG: The wild duck! I'll try it tomorrow morning.

(GINA *comes in by the passage door.*)

HEDVIG (*going towards her*): Did you find him, mother?

GINA: No, but I heard as he had called and taken Relling with him.

GREGERS: Are you sure of that?

GINA: Yes, the porter's wife said so. Molvik went with them, too, she said.

GREGERS: This evening, when his mind so sorely needs to wrestle in solitude . . . !

GINA (*takes off her things*): Yes, men are strange creatures, so they are. The Lord only knows where Relling has dragged him to! I ran over to Madam Eriksen's, but they weren't there.

HEDVIG (*struggling to keep back her tears*): Oh, if he should never come home any more!

GREGERS: He will come home again. I shall have news to give him tomorrow; and then you shall see how he comes home. You may rely upon that, Hedvig, and sleep in peace. Good-night.

(*He goes out by the passage door.*)

HEDVIG (*throws herself sobbing on* GINA's *neck*): Mother, mother!

GINA (*pats her shoulder and sighs*): Ah, yes; Relling was right, he was. That's what comes of it when crazy creatures go about presenting the claims of the—what-you-may-call-it.

(*The Curtain Falls.*)

Act Five

HIALMAR EKDAL'S *studio. Cold, grey morning light. Wet snow lies upon the large panes of the sloping roof-window.*

GINA *comes from the kitchen with an apron and bib on, and carrying a dusting-brush and a duster; she goes towards the sitting-room door. At the same moment* HEDVIG *comes hurriedly in from the passage.*

GINA (*stops*): Well?

HEDVIG: Oh, mother, I almost think he's down at Relling's . . .

GINA: There, you see!

HEDVIG: . . . because the porter's wife says she could hear that Relling had two people with him when he came home last night.

GINA: That's just what I thought.

HEDVIG: But it's no use his being there, if he won't come up to us.

GINA: I'll go down and speak to him at all events.

(OLD EKDAL, *in dressing-gown and slippers, and with a lighted pipe, appears at the door of his room.*)

EKDAL: Hialmar . . . Isn't Hialmar at home?

GINA: No, he's gone out.

EKDAL: So early? And in such a tearing snowstorm? Well, well; just as he pleases; I can take my morning walk alone.

(*He slides the garret door aside;* HEDVIG *helps him; he goes in; she closes it after him.*)

HEDVIG (*in an undertone*): Only think, mother, when poor grandfather hears that father is going to leave us.

GINA: Oh, nonsense; grandfather mustn't hear anything about it. It was a heaven's mercy he wasn't at home yesterday in all that hurly-burly.

HEDVIG: Yes, but . . .

(GREGERS *comes in by the passage door.*)

GREGERS: Well, have you any news of him?

GINA: They say he's down at Relling's.

GREGERS: At Relling's! Has he really been out with those creatures?

GINA: Yes, like enough.

GREGERS: When he ought to have been yearning for solitude, to collect and clear his thoughts . . .

GINA: Yes, you may well say so.

(RELLING *enters from the passage.*)

HEDVIG (*going to him*): Is father in your room?

GINA (*at the same time*): Is he there?

RELLING: Yes, to be sure he is.

HEDVIG: And you never let us know!

RELLING: Yes, I'm a brute. But in the first place I had to look after the other brute; I mean our dæmonic friend, of course; and then I fell so dead asleep that . . .

GINA: What does Ekdal say today?

RELLING: He says nothing whatever.

HEDVIG: Doesn't he speak?

RELLING: Not a blessed word.

GREGERS: No, no; I can understand that very well.

GINA: But what's he doing then?

RELLING: He's lying on the sofa, snoring.

GINA: Oh, is he? Yes, Ekdal's a rare one to snore.

HEDVIG: Asleep? Can he sleep?

RELLING: Well it certainly looks like it.

GREGERS: No wonder, after the spiritual conflict that has rent him . . .

GINA: And then he's never been used to gadding about out of doors at night.

HEDVIG: Perhaps it's a good thing that he's getting sleep, mother.

GINA: Of course it is; and we must take care we don't wake him up too early. Thank you, Relling. I must get the house cleaned up a bit now, and then . . . Come and help me, Hedvig.

(GINA *and* HEDVIG *go into the sitting-room.*)

GREGERS (*turning to* RELLING): What is your explanation of the spiritual tumult that is now going on in Hialmar Ekdal?

RELLING: Devil a bit of a spiritual tumult have *I* noticed in him.

GREGERS: What! Not at such a crisis, when his whole life has been placed on a new foundation . . . ? How can you think that such an individuality as Hialmar's . . . ?

RELLING: Oh, individuality—he! If he ever had any tendency to the abnormal developments you call individuality, I can assure you it was rooted out of him while he was still in his teens.

GREGERS: That would be strange indeed,—considering the loving care with which he was brought up.

RELLING: By those two high-flown, hysterical maiden aunts, you mean?

GREGERS: Let me tell you that they were women who never forgot the claim of the ideal—but of course you will only jeer at me again.

RELLING: No, I'm in no humour for that. I know all about those ladies; for he has ladled out no end of rhetoric on the subject of his "two soul-mothers." But I don't think he has much to thank them for. Ekdal's misfortune is that in his own circle he has always been looked upon as a shining light . . .

GREGERS: Not without reason, surely. Look at the depth of his mind!

RELLING: *I* have never discovered it. That his father believed in it I don't so much wonder; the old lieutenant has been an ass all his days.

GREGERS: He has had a child-like mind all his days; that is what you cannot understand.

RELLING: Well, so be it. But then, when our dear, sweet Hialmar went to college, he at once passed for the great light of the future amongst his comrades, too! He was handsome, the rascal—red and white—a shop-girl's dream of manly beauty; and with his superficially emotional temperament, and his sympathetic voice and his talent for declaiming other people's verses and other people's thoughts . . .

GREGERS (*indignantly*): Is it Hialmar Ekdal you are talking about in this strain?

RELLING: Yes, with your permission; I am simply giving you an inside view of the idol you are grovelling before.

GREGERS: I should hardly have thought I was quite stone blind.

RELLING: Yes, you are—or not far from it. You are a sick man, too, you see.

GREGERS: You are right there.

RELLING: Yes. Yours is a complicated case. First of all there is that plaguy integrity-fever; and then—what's worse—you are always in a delirium of hero-worship; you must always have something to adore, outside yourself.

GREGERS: Yes, I must certainly seek it outside myself.

RELLING: But you make such shocking mistakes about every new phœnix you think you have discovered. Here again you have come to a cotter's cabin with your claim of the ideal; and the people of the house are insolvent.

GREGERS: If you don't think better than that of Hialmar Ekdal, what pleasure can you find in being everlastingly with him?

RELLING: Well, you see, I'm supposed to be a sort of a doctor—save the mark! I can't but give a hand to the poor sick folk who live under the same roof with me.

GREGERS: Oh, indeed! Hialmar Ekdal is sick, too, is he!

RELLING: Most people are, worse luck.

GREGERS: And what remedy are you applying in Hialmar's case?

RELLING: My usual one. I am cultivating the life-illusion* in him.

GREGERS: Life—illusion? I didn't catch what you said.

RELLING: Yes, I said illusion. For illusion, you know, is the stimulating principle.

GREGERS: May I ask with what illusion Hialmar is inoculated?

RELLING: No, thank you; I don't betray professional secrets to quacksalvers. You would probably go and muddle his case still more than you have already. But my method is infallible. I have applied it to Molvik as well. I have made him "dæmonic." That's the blister I have to put on his neck.

GREGERS: Is he not really dæmonic, then?

RELLING: What the devil do you mean by dæmonic! It's only a piece of gibberish I've invented to keep up a spark of life in him. But for that, the poor harmless creature would have succumbed to self-contempt and despair many a long year ago. And then the old lieutenant! But he has hit upon his own cure, you see.

GREGERS: Lieutenant Ekdal? What of him?

RELLING: Just think of the old bear-hunter shutting himself up in that dark garret to shoot rabbits! I tell you there is not a happier sportsman in the world than that old man pottering about in there among all that rubbish. The four or five withered Christmas trees he has saved up are the same to him as the whole great fresh Höidal forest; the cock and the hens are big game-birds in the fir-tops; and the rabbits that flop about the garret floor are the bears he has to battle with—the mighty hunter of the mountains!

GREGERS: Poor unfortunate old man! Yes: he has indeed had to narrow the ideals of his youth.

RELLING: While I think of it, Mr. Werle, junior—don't use that foreign word: ideals. We have the excellent native word: lies.

GREGERS: Do you think the two things are related?

RELLING: Yes, just about as closely as typhus and putrid fever.

* "Livslögnen," literally "the life-lie."

GREGERS: Dr. Relling, I shall not give up the struggle until I have rescued Hialmar from your clutches!

RELLING: So much the worse for him. Rob the average man of his life-illusion, and you rob him of his happiness at the same stroke. (*To* HEDVIG, *who comes in from the sitting-room*) Well, little wild-duck-mother, I'm just going down to see whether papa is still lying meditating upon that wonderful invention of his. (*Goes out by passage door.*)

GREGERS (*approaches* HEDVIG): I can see by your face that you have not yet done it.

HEDVIG: What? Oh, that about the wild duck! No.

GREGERS: I suppose your courage failed when the time came.

HEDVIG: No, that wasn't it. But when I awoke this morning and remembered what we had been talking about, it seemed so strange.

GREGERS: Strange?

HEDVIG: Yes, I don't know . . . Yesterday evening, at the moment, I thought there was something so delightful about it; but since I have slept and thought of it again, it somehow doesn't seem worth while.

GREGERS: Ah, I thought you could not have grown up quite unharmed in this house.

HEDVIG: I don't care about that, if only father would come up . . .

GREGERS: Oh, if only your eyes had been opened to that which gives life it's value—if you possessed the true, joyous, fearless spirit of sacrifice, you would soon see how he would come up to you.—But I believe in you still, Hedvig.

(*He goes out by the passage door.* HEDVIG *wanders about the room for a time; she is on the point of going into the kitchen when a knock is heard at the garret door.* HEDVIG *goes over and opens it a little; old* EKDAL *comes out; she pushes the door to again.*)

EKDAL: H'm, it's not much fun to take one's morning walk alone.

HEDVIG: Wouldn't you like to go shooting, grandfather?

EKDAL: It's not the weather for it today. It's so dark there, you can scarcely see where you're going.

HEDVIG: Do you never want to shoot anything besides the rabbits?

EKDAL: Do you think the rabbits aren't good enough?

HEDVIG: Yes, but what about the wild duck?

EKDAL: Ho-ho! are you afraid I shall shoot your wild duck? Never in the world. Never.

HEDVIG: No, I suppose you couldn't; they say it's very difficult to shoot wild ducks.

EKDAL: Couldn't! Should rather think I could.

HEDVIG: How would you set about it, grandfather?—I don't mean with my wild duck, but with others?

EKDAL: I should take care to shoot them in the breast, you know; that's the surest place. And then you must shoot against the feathers, you see—not the way of the feathers.

HEDVIG: Do they die then, grandfather?

EKDAL: Yes, they die right enough—when you shoot properly. Well, I must go and brush up a bit. H'm—understand—h'm (*Goes into his room.*)

(HEDVIG *waits a little, glances towards the sitting-room door, goes over to the book-case, stands on tip-toe, takes the double-barrelled pistol down from the shelf and looks at it.* GINA, *with brush and duster, comes from the sitting-room.* HEDVIG *hastily lays down the pistol, unobserved.*)

GINA: Don't stand raking amongst father's things, Hedvig.

HEDVIG (*goes away from the bookcase*): I was only going to tidy up a little.

GINA: You'd better go into the kitchen and see if the coffee's keeping hot; I'll take his breakfast on a tray, when I go down to him.

(HEDVIG *goes out.* GINA *begins to sweep and clean up the studio. Presently the passage door is opened with hesitation, and* HIALMAR EKDAL *looks in. He has on his overcoat, but not his hat; he is unwashed, and his hair is dishevelled and unkempt. His eyes are dull and heavy.*)

GINA (*standing with the brush in her hand and looking at him*): Oh, there now, Ekdal—so you've come after all!

HIALMAR (*comes in and answers in a toneless voice*): I come—only to depart again immediately.

GINA: Yes, yes, I suppose so. But, Lord help us! what a sight you are!

HIALMAR: A sight?

GINA: And your nice winter coat, too! Well, that's done for.

HEDVIG (*at the kitchen door*): Mother, hadn't I better . . . ? (*Sees* HIALMAR, *gives a loud scream of joy and runs to him.*) Oh, father, father!

HIALMAR (*turns away and makes a gesture of repulsion*): Away, away, away! (*To* GINA) Keep her away from me, I say!

GINA (*in a low tone*): Go into the sitting-room, Hedvig.

(HEDVIG *does so without a word.*)

HIALMAR (*fussily pulls out the table-drawer*): I must have my books with me. Where are my books?

GINA: Which books?

HIALMAR: My scientific books, of course; the technical magazines I require for my invention.

GINA (*searches in the bookcase*): Is it these here paper-covered ones?

HIALMAR: Yes, of course.

GINA (*lays a heap of magazines on the table*): Shan't I get Hedvig to cut them for you?

HIALMAR: I don't require to have them cut for me. (*Short silence.*)

GINA: Then you're still set on leaving us, Ekdal?

HIALMAR (*rummaging amongst the books*): Yes, that is a matter of course, I should think.

GINA: Well, well.

HIALMAR (*vehemently*): How can I live here, to be stabbed to the heart every hour of the day?

GINA: God forgive you for thinking such vile things of me.

HIALMAR: Prove . . . !

GINA: I think it's you as has got to prove.

HIALMAR: After a past like yours? There are certain claims—I may almost call them claims of the ideal . . .

GINA: But what about grandfather? What's to become of him, poor dear!

HIALMAR: I know my duty; my helpless father will come with me. I am going out into the town to make arrangements . . . H'm—(*hesitatingly*)—has any one found my hat on the stairs?

GINA: No. Have you lost your hat?

HIALMAR: Of course I had it on when I came in last night; there's no doubt about that; but I couldn't find it this morning.

GINA: Lord help us! where have you been to with those two ne'er-do-wells?

HIALMAR: Oh, don't bother me about trifles. Do you suppose I am in the mood to remember details?

GINA: If only you haven't caught cold, Ekdal . . . (*Goes out into the kitchen.*)

HIALMAR (*talks to himself in a low tone of irritation, whilst he empties the table-drawer*): You're a scoundrel, Relling!—You're a low fellow!—Ah, you shameless tempter!—I wish I could get some one to stick a knife into you!

(*He lays some old letters on one side, finds the torn document of yesterday, takes it up and looks at the pieces; puts it down hurriedly as* GINA *enters.*)

GINA (*sets a tray with coffee, etc., on the table*): Here's a drop of something hot, if you'd fancy it. And there's some bread and butter and a snack of salt meat.

HIALMAR (*glancing at the tray*): Salt meat? Never under this roof! It's true I have not had a mouthful of solid food for nearly twenty-four hours; but no matter.—My memoranda! The commencement of

my autobiography! What has become of my diary, and all my important papers? (*Opens the sitting-room door but draws back*) She is there, too!

GINA: Good Lord! the child must be somewhere!

HIALMAR: Come out.

(*He makes room,* HEDVIG *comes, scared, into the studio.*)

HIALMAR (*with his hand upon the door-handle, says to* GINA): In these, the last moments I spend in my former home, I wish to be spared from interlopers . . . (*Goes into the room.*)

HEDVIG (*with a bound towards her mother, asks softly, trembling*): Does that mean me?

GINA: Stay out in the kitchen, Hedvig; or, no—you'd best go into your own room. (*Speaks to* HIALMAR *as she goes in to him*) Wait a bit, Ekdal; don't rummage so in the drawers; *I* know where everything is.

HEDVIG (*stands a moment immovable, in terror and perplexity, biting her lips to keep back the tears; then she clenches her hands convulsively and says softly*): The wild duck.

(*She steals over and takes the pistol from the shelf, opens the garret door a little way, creeps in and draws the door to after her.* HIALMAR *and* GINA *can be heard disputing in the sitting-room.*)

HIALMAR (*comes in with some manuscript books and old loose papers, which he lays upon the table*): That portmanteau is of no use! There are a thousand and one things I must drag with me.

GINA (*following with the portmanteau*): Why not leave all the rest for the present and only take a shirt and a pair of woollen drawers with you?

HIALMAR: Whew!—all these exhausting preparations . . . ! (*Pulls off his overcoat and throws it upon the sofa.*)

GINA: And there's the coffee getting cold.

HIALMAR: H'm. (*Drinks a mouthful without thinking of it and then another.*)

GINA (*dusting the backs of the chairs*): A nice job you'll have to find such another big garret for the rabbits.

HIALMAR: What! Am I to drag all those rabbits with me, too?

GINA: You don't suppose grandfather can get on without his rabbits.

HIALMAR: He must just get used to doing without them. Have not *I* to sacrifice very much greater things than rabbits!

GINA (*dusting the bookcase*): Shall I put the flute in the portmanteau for you?

HIALMAR: No. No flute for me. But give me the pistol!

GINA: Do you want to take the pistol with you?

HIALMAR: Yes. My loaded pistol.

GINA (*searching for it*): It's gone. He must have taken it in with him.

HIALMAR: Is he in the garret?

GINA: Yes, of course he's in the garret.

HIALMAR: H'm—poor lonely old man.

(*He takes a piece of bread and butter, eats it and finishes his cup of coffee.*)

GINA: If we hadn't have let that room, you could have moved in there.

HIALMAR: And continued to live under the same roof with . . . ! Never,—never!

GINA: But couldn't you put up with the sitting-room for a day or two? You could have it all to yourself.

HIALMAR: Never within these walls!

GINA: Well, then, down with Relling and Molvik.

HIALMAR: Don't mention those wretches' names to me! The very thought of them almost takes away my appetite.—Oh, no, I must go out into the storm and the snow-drift,—go from house to house and seek shelter for my father and myself.

GINA: But you've got no hat, Ekdal! You've been and lost your hat, you know.

HIALMAR: Oh, those two brutes, those slaves of all the vices! A hat must be procured. (*Takes another piece of bread and butter*) Some arrangements must be made. For I have no mind to throw away my life, either. (*Looks for something on the tray.*)

GINA: What are you looking for?

HIALMAR: Butter.

GINA: I'll get some at once. (*Goes into the kitchen.*)

HIALMAR (*calls after her*): Oh, it doesn't matter; dry bread is good enough for me.

GINA (*brings a dish of butter*): Look here; this is fresh churned.

(*She pours out another cup of coffee for him; he seats himself on the sofa, spreads more butter on the already buttered bread and eats and drinks awhile in silence.*)

HIALMAR: Could I, without being subject to intrusion—intrusion of any sort—could I live in the sitting-room there for a day or two?

GINA: Yes, to be sure you could, if you only would.

HIALMAR: For I see no possibility of getting all father's things out in such a hurry.

GINA: And, besides, you've surely got to tell him first as you don't mean to live with us others no more.

HIALMAR (*pushes away his coffee cup*): Yes, there is that, too; I shall have to lay bare the whole tangled story to him . . . I must turn matters over; I must have breathing-time; I cannot take all these burdens on my shoulders in a single day.

GINA: No, especially in such horrible weather as it is outside.

HIALMAR (*touching* WERLE'S *letter*): I see that paper is still lying about here.

GINA: Yes, *I* haven't touched it.

HIALMAR: So far as I am concerned it is mere waste paper . . .

GINA: Well, *I* have certainly no notion of making any use of it.

HIALMAR: . . . but we had better not let it get lost all the same;—in all the upset when I move, it might easily . . .

GINA: I'll take good care of it, Ekdal.

HIALMAR: The donation is in the first instance made to father, and it rests with him to accept or decline it.

GINA (*sighs*): Yes, poor old father . . .

HIALMAR: To make quite safe . . . Where shall I find some gum?

GINA (*goes to the bookcase*): Here's the gum-pot.

HIALMAR: And a brush?

GINA: The brush is here, too. (*Brings him the things.*)

HIALMAR (*takes a pair of scissors*): Just a strip of paper at the back . . . (*Clips and gums*) Far be it from me to lay hands upon what is not my own—and least of all upon what belongs to a destitute old man—and to—the other as well.—There now. Let it lie there for a time; and when it is dry, take it away. I wish never to see that document again. Never!

(GREGERS WERLE *enters from the passage.*)

GREGERS (*somewhat surprised*): What,—are you sitting here, Hialmar?

HIALMAR (*rises hurriedly*): I had sunk down from fatigue.

GREGERS: You have been having breakfast, I see.

HIALMAR: The body sometimes makes its claims felt, too.

GREGERS: What have you decided to do?

HIALMAR: For a man like me, there is only one course possible. I am just putting my most important things together. But it takes time, you know.

GINA (*with a touch of impatience*): Am I to get the room ready for you, or am I to pack your portmanteau?

HIALMAR (*after a glance of annoyance at* GREGERS): Pack—and get the room ready!

GINA (*takes the portmanteau*): Very well; then I'll put in the shirt and the other things. (*Goes into the sitting-room and draws the door to after her.*)

GREGERS (*after a short silence*): I never dreamed that this would be the end of it. Do you really feel it a necessity to leave house and home?

HIALMAR (*wanders about restlessly*): What would you have me do? —I am not fitted to bear unhappiness, Gregers. I must feel secure and at peace in my surroundings.

GREGERS: But can you not feel that here? Just try it. I should have thought you had firm ground to build upon now—if only you start afresh. And remember, you have your invention to live for.

HIALMAR: Oh, don't talk about my invention. It's perhaps still in the dim distance.

GREGERS: Indeed!

HIALMAR: Why, great heavens, what would you have me invent? Other people have invented almost everything already. It becomes more and more difficult every day . . .

GREGERS: And you have devoted so much labour to it.

HIALMAR: It was that blackguard Relling that urged me to it.

GREGERS: Relling?

HIALMAR: Yes, it was he that first made me realize my aptitude for making some notable discovery in photography.

GREGERS: Aha—it was Relling!

HIALMAR: Oh, I have been so truly happy over it! Not so much for the sake of the invention itself, as because Hedvig believed in it—believed in it with a child's whole eagerness of faith.—At least, I have been fool enough to go and imagine that she believed in it.

GREGERS: Can you really think Hedvig has been false to you?

HIALMAR: I can think anything now. It is Hedvig that stands in my way. She will blot out the sunlight from my whole life.

GREGERS: Hedvig! Is it Hedvig you are talking of? How should she blot out your sunlight?

HIALMAR (*without answering*): How unutterably I have loved that child! How unutterably happy I have felt every time I came home to my humble room, and she flew to meet me, with her sweet little blinking eyes. Oh, confiding fool that I have been! I loved her unutterably;—and I yielded myself up to the dream, the delusion, that she loved me unutterably in return.

GREGERS: Do you call that a delusion?

HIALMAR: How should I know? I can get nothing out of Gina; and besides, she is totally blind to the ideal side of these complications. But to you I feel impelled to open my mind, Gregers. I cannot shake off this frightful doubt—perhaps Hedvig has never really and honestly loved me.

GREGERS: What would you say if she were to give you a proof of her love? (*Listens.*) What's that? I thought I heard the wild duck . . . ?

HIALMAR: It's the wild duck quacking. Father's in the garret.

GREGERS: Is he? (*His face lights up with joy*): I say, you may yet have proof that your poor misunderstood Hedvig loves you!

HIALMAR: Oh, what proof can she give me? I dare not believe in any assurance from that quarter.

GREGERS: Hedvig does not know what deceit means.

HIALMAR: Oh, Gregers, that is just what I cannot be sure of. Who knows what Gina and that Mrs. Sörby may many a time have sat here whispering and tattling about? And Hedvig usually has her ears open, I can tell you. Perhaps the deed of gift was not such a surprise to her, after all. In fact, I'm not sure but that I noticed something of the sort.

GREGERS: What spirit is this that has taken possession of you?

HIALMAR: I have had my eyes opened. Just you notice;—you'll see, the deed of gift is only a beginning. Mrs. Sörby has always been a good deal taken up with Hedvig; and now she has the power to do whatever she likes for the child. They can take her from me whenever they please.

GREGERS: Hedvig will never, never leave you.

HIALMAR: Don't be so sure of that. If only they beckon to her and throw out a golden bait . . . ! And, oh! I have loved her so unspeakably! I would have counted it my highest happiness to take her tenderly by the hand and lead her, as one leads a timid child through a great dark empty room!—I am cruelly certain now that the poor photographer in his humble attic has never really and truly been anything to her. She has only cunningly contrived to keep on a good footing with him until the time came.

GREGERS: You don't believe that yourself, Hialmar.

HIALMAR: That is just the terrible part of it—I don't know what to believe,—I never can know it. But can you really doubt that it must be as I say? Ho-ho, you have far too much faith in the claim of the ideal, my good Gregers! If those others came, with the glamour of wealth about them, and called to the child:—"Leave him: come to us: here life awaits you . . . !"

GREGERS (*quickly*): Well, what then?

HIALMAR: If I then asked her: Hedvig, are you willing to renounce that life for me? (*Laughs scornfully*) No, thank you! You would soon hear what answer I should get. (*A pistol shot is heard from within the garret.*)

GREGERS (*loudly and joyfully*): Hialmar!

HIALMAR: There now; he must needs go shooting, too.

GINA (*comes in*): Oh, Ekdal, I can hear grandfather blazing away in the garret by hisself.

HIALMAR: I'll look in . . .

GREGERS (*eagerly, with emotion*): Wait a moment! Do you know what that was?

HIALMAR: Yes, of course I know.

GREGERS: No, you don't know. But *I* do. That was the proof!

HIALMAR: What proof?

GREGERS: It was a child's free-will offering. She has got your father to shoot the wild duck.

HIALMAR: To shoot the wild duck!

GINA: Oh, think of that . . . !

HIALMAR: What was that for?

GREGERS: She wanted to sacrifice to you her most cherished possession; for then she thought you would surely come to love her again.

HIALMAR (*tenderly, with emotion*): Oh, poor child!

GINA: What things she does think of!

GREGERS: She only wanted your love again, Hialmar. She could not live without it.

GINA (*struggling with her tears*): There, you can see for yourself, Ekdal.

HIALMAR: Gina, where is she?

GINA (*sniffs*): Poor dear, she's sitting out in the kitchen, I dare say.

HIALMAR (*goes over, tears open the kitchen door and says*): Hedvig, come, come in to me! (*Looks around*) No, she's not here.

GINA: Then she must be in her own little room.

HIALMAR (*without*): No, she's not here either. (*Comes in*) She must have gone out.

GINA: Yes, you wouldn't have her anywheres in the house.

HIALMAR: Oh, if she would only come home quickly, so that I can tell her . . . Everything will come right now, Gregers; now I believe we can begin life afresh.

GREGERS (*quietly*): I knew it; I knew the child would make amends.

(OLD EKDAL *appears at the door of his room; he is in full uniform and is busy buckling on his sword.*)

HIALMAR (*astonished*): Father! Are you there?

GINA: Have you been firing in your room?

EKDAL (*resentfully, approaching*): So you go shooting alone, do you, Hialmar?

HIALMAR (*excited and confused*): Then it wasn't you that fired that shot in the garret?

EKDAL: Me that fired? H'm.

GREGERS (*calls out to* HIALMAR): She has shot the wild duck herself!

HIALMAR: What can it mean? (*Hastens to the garret door, tears it aside, looks in and calls loudly*): Hedvig!

GINA (*runs to the door*): Good God, what's that!

HIALMAR (*goes in*): She's lying on the floor!

GREGERS: Hedvig! lying on the floor! (*Goes in to* HIALMAR)

GINA (*at the same time*): Hedvig! (*Inside the garret*) No, no, no!

EKDAL: Ho-ho! does she go shooting, too, now?

(HIALMAR, GINA *and* GREGERS *carry* HEDVIG *into the studio; in her dangling right hand she holds the pistol fast clasped in her fingers.*)

HIALMAR (*distracted*): The pistol has gone off. She has wounded herself. Call for help! Help!

GINA (*runs into the passage and calls down*): Relling! Relling! Doctor Relling; come up as quick as you can!

(HIALMAR *and* GREGERS *lay* HEDVIG *down on the sofa.*)

EKDAL (*quietly*): The woods avenge themselves.

HIALMAR (*on his knees beside* HEDVIG): She'll soon come to now. She's coming to . . . ; yes, yes, yes.

GINA (*who has come in again*): Where has she hurt herself? I can't see anything . . .

(RELLING *comes hurriedly, and immediately after him* MOLVIK; *the latter without his waistcoat and necktie, and with his coat open.*)

RELLING: What's the matter here?

GINA: They say Hedvig has shot herself.

HIALMAR: Come and help us!

RELLING: Shot herself!

(*He pushes the table aside and begins to examine her.*)

HIALMAR (*kneeling and looking anxiously up at him*): It can't be dangerous? Speak, Relling! She is scarcely bleeding at all. It can't be dangerous?

RELLING: How did it happen?

HIALMAR: Oh, we don't know . . .

GINA: She wanted to shoot the wild duck.

RELLING: The wild duck?

HIALMAR: The pistol must have gone off.

RELLING: H'm. Indeed.

EKDAL: The woods avenge themselves. But I'm not afraid, all the same. (*Goes into the garret and closes the door after him.*)

HIALMAR: Well, Relling,—why don't you say something?

RELLING: The ball has entered the breast.

HIALMAR: Yes, but she's coming to!

RELLING: Surely you can see that Hedvig is dead.

GINA (*bursts into tears*): Oh, my child, my child . . .

GREGERS (*huskily*): In the depths of the sea . . .

HIALMAR (*jumps up*): No, no, she must live! Oh, for God's sake, Relling—only a moment—only just till I can tell her how unspeakably I loved her all the time!

RELLING: The bullet has gone through her heart. Internal hemorrhage. Death must have been instantaneous.

HIALMAR: And I! I hunted her from me like an animal! And she crept terrified into the garret and died for love of me! (*Sobbing*) I can never atone to her! I can never tell her . . . ! (*Clenches his hands and cries, upwards*) O thou above . . . ! If thou be indeed! Why hast thou done this thing to me?

GINA: Hush, hush, you mustn't go on that awful way. We had no right to keep her, I suppose.

MOLVIK: The child is not dead, but sleepeth.

RELLING: Bosh!

HIALMAR (*becomes calm, goes over to the sofa, folds his arms and looks at* HEDVIG): There she lies so stiff and still.

RELLING (*tries to loosen the pistol*): She's holding it so tight, so tight.

GINA: No, no, Relling, don't break her fingers; let the pistol be.

HIALMAR: She shall take it with her.

GINA: Yes, let her. But the child mustn't lie here for a show. She shall go to her own room, so she shall. Help me, Ekdal. (HIALMAR *and* GINA *take* HEDVIG *between them.*)

HIALMAR (*as they are carrying her*): Oh, Gina, Gina, can you survive this!

GINA: We must help each other to bear it. For now at least she belongs to both of us.

MOLVIK (*stretches out his arms and mumbles*): Blessed be the Lord; to earth thou shalt return; to earth thou shalt return . . .

RELLING (*whispers*): Hold your tongue, you fool; you're drunk.

(HIALMAR *and* GINA *carry the body out through the kitchen door.* RELLING *shuts it after them.* MOLVIK *slinks out into the passage.*)

RELLING (*goes over to* GREGERS *and says*): No one shall ever convince me that the pistol went off by accident.

GREGERS (*who has stood terrified, with convulsive twitchings*): Who can say how the dreadful thing happened?

RELLING: The powder has burnt the body of her dress. She must have pressed the pistol right against her breast and fired.

GREGERS: Hedvig has not died in vain. Did you not see how sorrow set free what is noble in him?

RELLING: Most people are ennobled by the actual presence of death. But how long do you suppose this nobility will last in him?

GREGERS: Why should it not endure and increase throughout his life?

RELLING: Before a year is over, little Hedvig will be nothing to him but a pretty theme for declamation.

GREGERS: How dare you say that of Hialmar Edkal?

RELLING: We will talk of this again, when the grass has first withered on her grave. Then you'll hear him spouting about "the child too early torn from her father's heart"; then you'll see him steep himself in a syrup of sentiment and self-admiration and self-pity. Just you wait!

GREGERS: If you are right and I am wrong, then life is not worth living.

RELLING: Oh, life would be quite tolerable, after all, if only we could be rid of the confounded duns that keep on pestering us, in our poverty, with the claim of the ideal.

GREGERS (*looking straight before him*): In that case, I am glad that my destiny is what is.

RELLING: May I inquire,—what is your destiny?

GREGERS (*going*): To be the thirteenth at table.

RELLING: The devil it is.

(*The Curtain Falls.*)

Ibsen's purpose in *The Wild Duck* is to dramatize the conflict between reality and illusion by means of stage symbolism and characters who are embodiments of specific points of view. From a close study of this play one can learn how a playwright is able to control the attitude of his audience by loading the dramatic dice, so to speak. The drama is one of the most objective literary forms, but *The Wild Duck* furnishes examples of many devices available to the dramatist for establishing his ideas and attitudes.

Because a revelation of the background and the personality of each of the characters is necessary to the understanding of the developing conflict, Ibsen devotes most of Act One to exposition. How does Ibsen prevent the theatrically conventional opening gossip of two servants, Pettersen and Jensen, from seeming artificial and implausible? Ibsen is careful not to allow the situation to be clarified in simple, straightforward statements, but instead uses the method of indirection, and so only gradually are the details of the story's background set into a coherent pattern. Just as the story of Ekdal reaches its climactic moment, it is abruptly broken off and the tone becomes one of light, social gaiety. When Hialmar and Gregers resume the exposition, what additional insights into character and situation are presented? Finally, through the strained discussion between Gregers and Werle, the audience approaches from a third direction the relationships of Werle with Mrs. Sörby, Ekdal, Hialmar, Gina, his dead wife, and his son. Gregers himself is a standard dramatic device: a character returning from the past to upset the existing equilibrium. Ibsen deliberately causes his audience to draw a mistaken first impression of Gregers. We first accept as true his statement of charges against Werle, admiring the courage of an idealistic son who is willing to speak out against an unscrupulous father. However, as in our own experience in meeting people, we are later forced to adjust this impression as his character unfolds.

In the following acts are other stage devices that later dramatists have imitated. Of these, perhaps the handling of the pistol best reveals Ibsen's technical skill. (Compare Shaw's use of the same prop in *Arms and the Man*.) Attention is first dramatically called to the pistol when in the third act (p. 390) a sudden shot within the garret startles Gregers and Gina. After Hialmar emerges from the attic, interest is kept focused on the pistol by Gina's mispronunciation of the word. Her uneasy apprehension that it will someday be the source of "mischief" is but one foreshadowing of the tragedy. (What are some others?) In order to create suspense, the loaded pistol is then placed where it will constantly attract the audience's attention (p. 391):

> HIALMAR: Don't touch the pistol, Hedvig! One of the barrels is loaded; remember that.

With typical histrionics Hialmar again points to it as having "played its part in the tragedy of the house of Ekdal" (p. 393) — in the abortive suicides of both his father and himself — an

unconscious and ironic understatement in view of the tragedy ahead. The build-up for the melodramatic curtain scene of Act Five begins (p. 435) when in a moment of suspense Hedvig removes the pistol, only to be suddenly interrupted by Gina. There is a deft bit of dramatic irony later when Gina and Hialmar are aware that the pistol is missing but think that Ekdal is using it. Had they bothered to investigate, the tragedy could have been averted. The dramatic timing of the final shot is also ironic in that it comes as a poignant response to Hialmar's scornful and sardonic insistence that Hedvig is ready to repudiate him. The irony is then given one further twist by Gregers' delighted assumption that this is the shot that will permanently unite father and daughter. These are examples of Ibsen's way of dramatizing and giving vitality to the ideas at the heart of the play.

In its simplest terms the thematic assertion derived from the basic conflict between truth and illusion is stated by Relling (p. 434): "Rob the average man of his life-illusion, and you rob him of his happiness at the same stroke." Better to live happily in illusions which one does not recognize as such than to be aware of the truth when one's life consequently may be wretched. To extract the theme so baldly, however, is to lose sight of its powerful dramatic expression, which is the play.

In early productions of *The Wild Duck,* actors playing the part of Relling on occasion made themselves up to resemble Ibsen, and as a result were sometimes accused by critics of not realizing that Gregers was the real Ibsen. Both critics and actors are in error here, for Ibsen did not attempt to dramatize his own personality in either character; rather he wanted to develop attitudes toward the propositions that he has dramatized. Relling, of course, comes closest to being Ibsen's spokesman. Yet although he is an extremely clever and intelligent realist who is keenly aware of the value of the escapism in which the Ekdals indulge, he does not impress us as an admirable character. On the other hand, although Gregers is a benighted idealist, it is necessary to distinguish between his ideals, which Ibsen does not attack, and the monstrous, blundering use to which Gregers puts them, for it is the blundering that is the object of the dramatist's bitter satire.

Gregers' persistence in uncovering a dead past and in destroying the "life-lies" carefully inculcated into Hialmar by Relling is responsible for the ultimate tragedy. By making Hialmar realize his "aptitude for making some notable discovery in photography" (p. 442), Relling had succeeded in giving him a sense of personal

dignity and a purpose in life which his dull, tedious occupation could never have done. Although every time that the invention is discussed Hialmar seems to have a new reason for completing it (what are they?), the fact remains that the dream has inspired an idealism which plays a large part in his happiness. His faith in his wife, his love for Hedvig, and his pleasure in supporting his father all give him the peace and security he needs: "I am an inventor, and I am the breadwinner of a family. That exalts me above my mean surroundings" (p. 396). How is each of these spiritual props in turn destroyed by Gregers in his misguided attempt to secure for Hialmar a "real" ennobled happiness, "a communion founded on truth, and free from all taint of deception . . ." (p. 412)?

Ironically, Gregers himself is an escapist who has deluded himself into believing that he is a realist. He is incapable of coming to terms with human experience, for he admits to Relling (p. 398) that his "claim of the ideal" has never been honored. To undermine Gregers' position, Ibsen deftly uses Mrs. Sörby's statement that her relationship with Werle is based on complete frankness. Here is Gregers' ideal of a true marriage realized; yet he absolutely refuses to face the facts and merely attempts to dismiss them by saying, "But this is a totally different matter, Hialmar. You surely don't compare either yourself or your wife with those two . . .? Oh, you understand me well enough" (p. 420). In an effort to escape from his own sense of inadequacy, Gregers has tried vainly to establish some ideal outside of himself. That he should pick Hialmar as a great mind capable of being "saved" is excellent proof of his own blindness. Relling shrewdly analyzes Gregers' difficulty as "integrity-fever" and "delirium of hero-worship" (p. 432). What does he mean? Why should he frequently associate metaphors of illness with Gregers? By the end of the play Gregers is in grave danger of losing his illusions, which he, like Hialmar, needs in order to be happy. Without them, he declares melodramatically, his destiny is death.

Although this statement of Gregers' is absurd, it is actually the same conclusion that little Hedvig reaches. Told that she can regain her father's love by sacrificing her most beloved possession she enters the garret determined to shoot the wild duck. But because she knows only the world of illusion, represented by the garret and the wild bird, she cannot endure its loss and chooses suicide as the easier alternative. The pathos of her unnecessary death — all the more poignant because it will have no permanent meaning for Hialmar — intensifies the audience's annoyance and irritation, which have been developing because of Gregers' inter-

ference in the Ekdals' happiness and because of Hialmar's stupidity, sentimentality, and selfishness. Although we may sympathize with Gregers' sincerity and with Hialmar's desire for his family's happiness, our final feeling toward the two can be only one of contempt and disgust. Our affection is reserved not only for innocent little Hedvig, but also for Gina, a well-adjusted realist who has forgotten her past sins in her effort to manage her household as well as her husband's business, and for Ekdal, victim of a scheming partner and a vicious law, who finds his only pleasures in liquor and in the garret which he pretends is the forest of his old life.

In order to dramatize his theme more forcefully Ibsen has employed two major symbols: the wild duck and the garret of the Ekdal apartment. If one is baffled at first by the multiplicity of associations built up around the wild duck, he may perhaps find an amused consolation in the despair of the French critic Sarcey, who saw the play at the Théâtre-Libre in 1891: "Ah, that Wild Duck! Nobody in the world, nobody in the universe, not you who have heard the play, nor Lindenlaub and Ephraim who translated it exactly, nor the author who wrote it, nor Shakespeare who inspired it, nor God, nor the devil — nobody will ever know what that wild duck is, nor what it is doing in the play, nor what it means, nor what it rimes with."[1] With all due allowance for the French temperament, Sarcey seems to be somewhat overstating the difficulty. On the most obvious level, both the wild duck and the garret are symbols of the life of illusion. What do the garret and its inhabitants offer specifically to Hialmar, Ekdal, and Hedvig? Each of the symbols, however, has more profound significance. Hedvig, with intuitive insight, realizes that the garret is really "the depths of the sea" into which a wounded duck dives to perish (p. 389). The garret symbolically provides this escape from the pain of the world — to it Ekdal hastily retreats when he learns that Hedvig has shot herself — and, Gregers believes, such an escape into the "life-illusion" is a kind of death. Furthermore, Hedvig actually does end her own life there.

The symbolism of the wild duck is first used by Werle in his description of Ekdal upon his release from prison, a broken and defeated man, "past all help" (p. 349). Since Werle is a hunter, his use of the metaphor is psychologically sound. In fact, as Werle is originally responsible for the trouble that befalls the Ekdal family, it is fitting that he should have brought down the wild duck. Old Ekdal is unconscious of the grim irony latent in his

[1] Quoted in Alan R. Thompson, *The Dry Mock* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1948), p. 222.

praise of Werle: "It's Hakon Werle we have to thank for her . . ." (p. 375). Gina is indeed "Mr. Werle's wing-broken victim" (p. 413), as are Ekdal and Hialmar: "Are you alluding to the well-nigh fatal shot that has broken my father's wing – and mine, too?" (p. 395). Thus the symbol of the wild duck is not neatly to be equated with any one character or meaning. It is instead a kind of crucial organizing metaphor, throwing into focus the whole pattern of character-relationships in the play. The wild duck represents all of the incomplete, broken, and frustrated lives that have been touched by Werle's past misdeeds – the lives of Ekdal, Gregers, Gina, Hedvig, and Hialmar.

Ibsen, however, does not go through his play labeling his characters with the symbol. As we have seen, both Hialmar and Gregers, with their limited and often erroneous understanding, make frequent use of the metaphor in defining their relationships with others, thus adding to its subtlety and complexity. Gregers, for example, tells Hialmar: "You have strayed into a poisonous marsh, Hialmar; an insidious disease has taken hold of you, and you have sunk down to die in the dark" (p. 395). For Gregers, the "insidious disease" is Hialmar's willingness to delude himself by living in a world of illusions which will be his moral and spiritual death. If Hialmar is to be thought of as the wild duck, it naturally follows that Gregers desires, as his goal in life, to be the "amazingly clever dog" which saves it (p. 377). But the wild duck is also a symbol for Hedvig, who is innocent of the fact that her description of it (p. 388) is ironically appropriate to herself. Like the duck, "she is so much to be pitied." Hedvig too is lonely, because she also "has been taken right away from all her friends" by her father, who is keeping her home from school. Moreover, as Gina admits later (on p. 424), "nobody knows where she came from either" (p. 388). Finally, like the wild ducks which "dive and bite themselves fast in tangle and sea-weed, down among the ooze" (p. 377), never to come up again, Hedvig too ends her own life "in the depths of the sea."

QUESTIONS

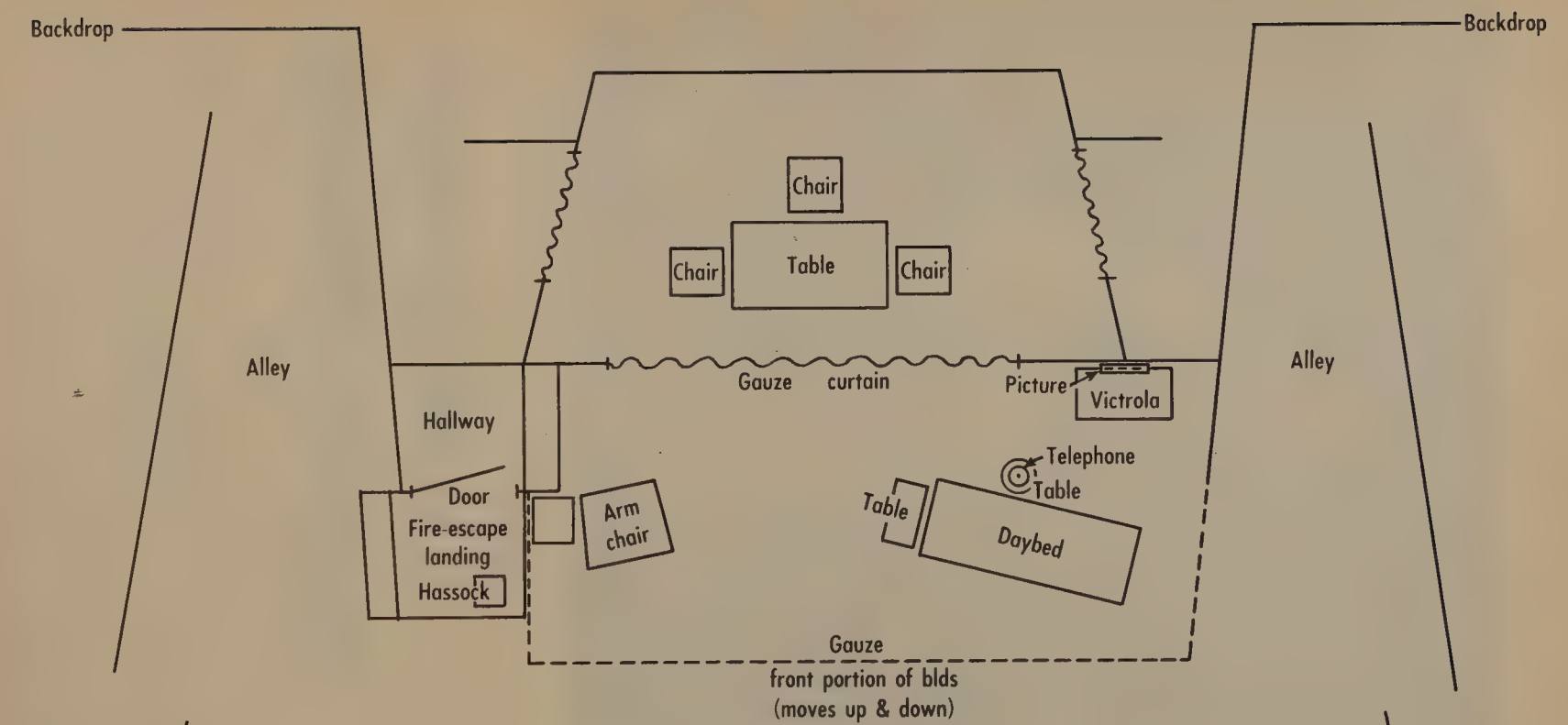
1. Why is Act One set in the Werle home? Could Ibsen have achieved his purpose as easily had the setting for all five acts been in Hialmar's apartment? Why does he introduce Hialmar away from home?
2. What is the function of the three gentlemen who appear in Act One?

3. How does the bill of fare that Hialmar brings back from Mrs. Sörby's party reveal his character? How does Werle's letter to Hedvig serve the same purpose?
4. What does old Ekdal's uniform reveal about the man?
5. How is the tragedy of Hedvig's suicide foreshadowed?
6. What does Gregers mean (p. 377) when he first says that he will be like the wild duck, and then a moment later says he "should like best to be a clever dog"? Does his conduct later in the play bear out these remarks?
7. As the second-act curtain falls on Hialmar's declaration of his mission in life, we are meant to recall Gregers' similar declaration in the final moments of Act One. Why does Ibsen juxtapose the two ideals in this way?
8. When a playwright is confronted with many characters operating in a limited set, he must often use ingenuity to clear the stage of those whom he does not want in a particular scene. How does Ibsen handle this problem of exits when he wants: (a) Hedvig and Gregers alone (pp. 385 ff.); (b) Werle and Gregers alone (pp. 401-403)?
9. For what purpose is Molvik used?
10. Because drama demands greater compression of detail than a novel, a playwright must often create the illusion of an off-stage reality which in point of fact does not exist at all. A novelist might have written an exciting chapter on Hialmar and Gregers' walk; Ibsen omits it entirely, although it is crucial to his plot. Why, specifically, does he omit it? How does he succeed in suggesting what took place on the walk even before Hialmar questions Gina?
11. Hialmar's discovery of Gina's past and his own double standard of morality present an interesting parallel to a similar situation with Anna and Mat in *Anna Christie*. Discuss their similarities and differences.
12. How does Gina's point of view about living remind one of Doc's in *Come Back, Little Sheba*?
13. Although one might be prejudiced against Gina because of her conduct at the time she married Hialmar, how does Ibsen nevertheless create a final sympathetic attitude toward her?
14. Would Shaw agree with Relling's assertion: "Rob the average man of his life-illusion, and you rob him of his happiness at the same stroke"? How would Synge modify the statement?
15. What does old Ekdal mean in his first and last scenes: "The woods avenge themselves"?
16. What does Gregers mean when he says that his destiny is "to be the thirteenth at table" (p. 449)? How has Ibsen motivated the remark?
17. Ibsen was the first modern dramatist to be concerned with the influence of heredity on his characters. Discuss its role in shaping the lives of Hialmar, Gregers, and Hedvig. What is the worry imbedded in Gregers' remark (on p. 434): "Ah, I thought you could not have grown up quite unharmed in this house"?

18. Like the wild duck, blindness comes to have great dramatic and symbolic significance from the moment old Werle enters the play until Gregers' last words to Hedvig are spoken. Discuss how weakness of eyesight has been used by Ibsen (a) to establish plot; (b) to reveal character; and (c) to express symbolically the theme of his play.
19. In his preface to *The Playboy of the Western World,* Synge attacks Ibsen's "joyless and pallid words," arguing that "one must have reality, and one must have joy." What qualities in *The Wild Duck* might Synge be objecting to? Could one argue, on the other hand, that there is laughter in Ibsen's play? If so, what is its contribution to the tone of the play?
20. Is *The Wild Duck* a tragedy? If so, whose tragedy is it — Gregers'? Hialmar's? Gina's? Hedvig's? If it is not, why does it fail to achieve the status of real tragedy?

TENNESSEE WILLIAMS

THE GLASS MENAGERIE



THE GLASS MENAGERIE

TENNESSEE WILLIAMS

One of the most outstanding dramatists to appear on the American theatrical scene since World War II is Tennessee Williams (1914 –), who won five major playwriting awards in the first decade after *The Glass Menagerie* appeared on Broadway. Born Thomas Lanier Williams, he adopted his college nickname "Tennessee" because he came from pioneer Tennessee ancestry. His father was a traveling shoe salesman; his mother, a member of the Southern aristocracy. It was his maternal grandfather, an Episcopalian rector, who influenced the boy's literary development. A few years after his family moved to St. Louis from Mississippi, Williams entered the University of Missouri, but because he spent more time on his own writing than on his studies (he failed the R.O.T.C. course), his father insisted that he go to work in a shoe factory. For two years he worked all day at a job he hated (although he admitted later he gained "valuable insight into the monotony of the white collar worker's life") and stayed up writing most of the night until he finally collapsed under the strain. Upon his recovery he returned to college, studying first at Washington University in St. Louis and then at the University of Iowa, from which he was graduated in 1938. Traveling restlessly all over the country on a roving writing career after graduation, he held every conceivable kind of job – he was a bellhop, a teletypist, a theater usher, a warehouse handyman, and a reciter of verses in a Greenwich Village night club.

By 1939 Williams' one-act plays were becoming known in theatrical circles. His full-length play *Battle of Angels,* produced in 1940, infuriated a Boston audience with its theme of violence, sex, and decadence; it was banned by Boston's Watch and Ward Society and collapsed in failure. The year 1943 found him trying to write scripts for M-G-M, but his distaste for assignments to provide dialogue for Lana Turner and Margaret O'Brien soon terminated his career in Hollywood. Finally, with the enthusiastic reception accorded *The Glass Menagerie* in 1945, Williams won acclaim. The honors heaped on that play have been showered on its successors with amazing regularity. *The Glass Menagerie* won the

New York Drama Critics' Circle Award, as did *A Streetcar Named Desire* and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof;* the latter two plays also won Pulitzer Prizes and have helped make Williams one of the most respected figures writing for the theater today.

LIST OF WORKS

Plays

Battle of Angels (1940)
The Glass Menagerie (1945)
You Touched Me! (in collaboration with Donald Windham) (1946)
27 Wagons Full of Cotton and Other One-Act Plays (1946)
A Streetcar Named Desire (1947)
American Blues (five short plays) (1948)
Summer and Smoke (1948)
The Rose Tattoo (1951)
Camino Real (1953)
Cat on a Hot Tin Roof (1955)

Novels and Short Stories

One Arm, and Other Stories (1948)
The Roman Spring of Mrs. Stone (1950)
Hard Candy, a Book of Stories (1954)

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PRODUCTION NOTES FOR *THE GLASS MENAGERIE*

The reader of *The Glass Menagerie* has the advantage, denied the theater-goer, of having at hand Tennessee Williams' interesting production notes, prepared for the published version of the play. These notes, which follow, shed light on the author's interpretation of the unusual theatrical devices he employs in his drama; but more than that, Williams' commentary provides an insight into the whole theory of dramatic art upon which his plays are constructed.

Being a "memory play," *The Glass Menagerie* can be presented with unusual freedom of convention. Because of its considerably delicate or tenuous material, atmospheric touches and subtleties of direction play a particularly important part. Expressionism and all other unconventional techniques in drama have only one valid aim, and that is a closer approach to truth. When a play employs unconventional techniques, it is not, or certainly shouldn't be, trying to escape its responsibility of dealing with reality, or interpreting experience, but is actually or should be attempting to find a closer approach, a more penetrating and vivid expression of things as they are. The straight realistic play with its genuine frigidaire and authentic ice-cubes, its characters that speak exactly as its audience speaks, corresponds to the academic landscape and has the same virtue of a photographic likeness. Everyone should know nowadays the unimportance of the photographic in art: that truth, life, or reality is an organic thing which the poetic imagination can represent or suggest, in essence, only through transformation, through changing into other forms than those which were merely present in appearance.

These remarks are not meant as a preface only to this particular play. They have to do with a conception of a new, plastic theatre which must take the place of the exhausted theatre of realistic conventions if the theatre is to resume vitality as a part of our culture.

THE SCREEN DEVICE

There is *only one important difference between the original and acting version of the play* and that is the *omission* in the latter of the device which I tentatively included in my *original* script. This device was the use of a screen on which were projected magic-lantern slides bearing images or titles. I do not regret the omission of this device from the present Broadway production. The extraordinary power of Miss Taylor's performance made it suitable to have the utmost simplicity in the physical production. But I think it may be interesting to some readers to see how this device was conceived. So I am putting it into the published manuscript. These images and legends, projected from behind, were cast on a section of wall between the front-room

and dining-room areas, which should be indistinguishable from the rest when not in use.

The purpose of this will probably be apparent. It is to give accent to certain values in each scene. Each scene contains a particular point (or several) which is structurally the most important. In an episodic play, such as this, the basic structure or narrative line may be obscured from the audience; the effect may seem fragmentary rather than architectural. This may not be the fault of the play so much as a lack of attention in the audience. The legend or image upon the screen will strengthen the effect of what is merely allusion in the writing and allow the primary point to be made more simply and lightly than if the entire responsibility were on the spoken lines. Aside from this structural value, I think the screen will have a definite emotional appeal, less definable but just as important. An imaginative producer or director may invent many other uses for this device than those indicated in the present script. In fact the possibilities of the device seem much larger to me than the instance of this play can possibly utilize.

THE MUSIC

Another extra-literary accent in this play is provided by the use of music. A single recurring tune, "The Glass Menagerie," is used to give emotional emphasis to suitable passages. This tune is like circus music, not when you are on the grounds or in the immediate vicinity of the parade, but when you are at some distance and very likely thinking of something else. It seems under those circumstances to continue almost interminably and it weaves in and out of your preoccupied consciousness; then it is the lightest, most delicate music in the world and perhaps the saddest. It expresses the surface vivacity of life with the underlying strain of immutable and inexpressible sorrow. When you look at a piece of delicately spun glass you think of two things: how beautiful it is and how easily it can be broken. Both of those ideas should be woven into the recurring tune, which dips in and out of the play as if it were carried on a wind that changes. It serves as a thread of connection and allusion between the narrator with his separate point in time and space and the subject of his story. Between each episode it returns as reference to the emotion, nostalgia, which is the first condition of the play. It is primarily Laura's music and therefore comes out most clearly when the play focuses upon her and the lovely fragility of glass which is her image.

THE LIGHTING

The lighting in the play is not realistic. In keeping with the atmosphere of memory, the stage is dim. Shafts of light are focused on selected areas or actors, sometimes in contradistinction to what is the

apparent center. For instance, in the quarrel scene between Tom and Amanda, in which Laura has no active part, the clearest pool of light is on her figure. This is also true of the supper scene, when her silent figure on the sofa should remain the visual center. The light upon Laura should be distinct from the others, having a peculiar pristine clarity such as light used in early religious portraits of female saints or madonnas. A certain correspondence to light in religious paintings, such as El Greco's, where the figures are radiant in atmosphere that is relatively dusky, could be effectively used throughout the play. (It will also permit a more effective use of the screen.) A free, imaginative use of light can be of enormous value in giving a mobile, plastic quality to plays of a more or less static nature.

CHARACTERS

AMANDA WINGFIELD (*the mother*)

A little woman of great but confused vitality clinging frantically to another time and place. Her characterization must be carefully created, not copied from type. She is not paranoiac, but her life is paranoia. There is much to admire in Amanda, and as much to love and pity as there is to laugh at. Certainly she has endurance and a kind of heroism, and though her foolishness makes her unwittingly cruel at times, there is tenderness in her slight person.

LAURA WINGFIELD (*her daughter*)

Amanda, having failed to establish contact with reality, continues to live vitally in her illusions, but Laura's situation is even graver. A childhood illness has left her crippled, one leg slightly shorter than the other, and held in a brace. This defect need not be more than suggested on the stage. Stemming from this, Laura's separation increases till she is like a piece of her own glass collection, too exquisitely fragile to move from the shelf.

TOM WINGFIELD (*her son*)

And the narrator of the play. A poet with a job in a warehouse. His nature is not remorseless, but to escape from a trap he has to act without pity.

JIM O'CONNOR (*the gentleman caller*)

A nice, ordinary, young man.

SCENE: An Alley in St. Louis.

TIME: Now and the Past.

The Glass Menagerie was first produced at the Civic Theater, Chicago, Illinois, on December 26, 1944, and then at the Playhouse Theater, New York City, on March 31, 1945.

Scene One

The Wingfield apartment is in the rear of the building, one of those vast hive-like conglomerations of cellular living-units that flower as warty growths in overcrowded urban centers of lower middle-class population and are symptomatic of the impulse of this largest and fundamentally enslaved section of American society to avoid fluidity and differentiation and to exist and function as one interfused mass of automatism.

The apartment faces an alley and is entered by a fire-escape, a structure whose name is a touch of accidental poetic truth, for all of these huge buildings are always burning with the slow and implacable fires of human desperation. The fire-escape is included in the set—that is, the landing of it and steps descending from it.

The scene is memory and is therefore nonrealistic. Memory takes a lot of poetic license. It omits some details; others are exaggerated, according to the emotional value of the articles it touchs, for memory is seated predominantly in the heart. The interior is therefore rather dim and poetic.

At the rise of the curtain, the audience is faced with the dark, grim rear wall of the Wingfield tenement. This building, which runs parallel to the footlights, is flanked on both sides by dark, narrow alleys which run into murky canyons of tangled clotheslines, garbage cans and the sinister latticework of neighboring fire-escapes. It is up and down these side alleys that exterior entrances and exits are made, during the play. At the end of TOM'S *opening commentary, the dark tenement wall slowly reveals (by means of a transparency) the interior of the ground floor Wingfield apartment.*

Downstage is the living room, which also serves as a sleeping room for LAURA, *the sofa unfolding to make her bed. Upstage, center, and divided by a wide arch or second proscenium with transparent faded portieres (or second curtain), is the dining room. In an old-fashioned what-not in the living room are seen scores of transparent glass animals. A blown-up photograph of the father hangs on the wall of the living room, facing the audience, to the left of the archway. It is the face of a very handsome young man in a*

doughboy's First World War cap. He is gallantly smiling, ineluctably smiling, as if to say, "I will be smiling forever."

The audience hears and sees the opening scene in the dining room through both the transparent fourth wall of the building and the transparent gauze portieres of the dining-room arch. It is during this revealing scene that the fourth wall slowly ascends, out of sight. This transparent exterior wall is not brought down again until the very end of the play, during TOM's *final speech.*

The narrator is an undisguised convention of the play. He takes whatever license with dramatic convention as is convenient to his purposes.

TOM *enters dressed as a merchant sailor from alley, stage left, and strolls across the front of the stage to the fire-escape. There he stops and lights a cigarette. He addresses the audience.*

TOM: Yes, I have tricks in my pocket, I have things up my sleeve. But I am the opposite of a stage magician. He gives you illusion that has the appearance of truth. I give you truth in the pleasant disguise of illusion.

To begin with, I turn back time. I reverse it to that quaint period, the thirties, when the huge middle class of America was matriculating in a school for the blind. Their eyes had failed them, or they had failed their eyes, and so they were having their fingers pressed forcibly down on the fiery Braille alphabet of a dissolving economy.

In Spain there was revolution. Here there was only shouting and confusion.

In Spain there was Guernica. Here there were disturbances of labor, sometimes pretty violent, in otherwise peaceful cities such as Chicago, Cleveland, Saint Louis . . .

This is the social background of the play.

(MUSIC.)

The play is memory.

Being a memory play, it is dimly lighted, it is sentimental, it is not realistic.

In memory everything seems to happen to music. That explains the fiddle in the wings.

I am the narrator of the play, and also a character in it.

The other characters are my mother, Amanda, my sister, Laura, and a gentleman caller who appears in the final scenes.

He is the most realistic character in the play, being an emissary

from a world of reality that we were somehow set apart from.

But since I have a poet's weakness for symbols, I am using this character also as a symbol; he is the long delayed but always expected something that we live for.

There is a fifth character in the play who doesn't appear except in this larger-than-life-size photograph over the mantel.

This is our father who left us a long time ago.

He was a telephone man who fell in love with long distances; he gave up his job with the telephone company and skipped the light fantastic out of town . . .

The last we heard of him was a picture post-card from Mazatlan, on the Pacific coast of Mexico, containing a message of two words—

"Hello— Good-bye!" and no address.

I think the rest of the play will explain itself. . . .

(AMANDA'S *voice becomes audible through the portieres.*)
(LEGEND ON SCREEN: "OU SONT LES NEIGES.")
(*He divides the portieres and enters the upstage area.*)
(AMANDA *and* LAURA *are seated at a drop-leaf table. Eating is indicated by gestures without food or utensils.* AMANDA *faces the audience,* TOM *and* LAURA *are seated in profile. The interior has lit up softly and through the scrim we see* AMANDA *and* LAURA *seated at the table in the upstage area.*)

AMANDA (*calling*): Tom?

TOM: Yes, Mother.

AMANDA: We can't say grace until you come to the table!

TOM: Coming, Mother. (*He bows slightly and withdraws, reappearing a few moments later in his place at the table.*)

AMANDA (*to her son*): Honey, don't *push* with your *fingers.* If you have to push with something, the thing to push with is a crust of bread. And chew—chew! Animals have sections in their stomachs which enable them to digest food without mastication, but human beings are supposed to chew their food before they swallow it down. Eat food leisurely, son, and really enjoy it. A well-cooked meal has lots of delicate flavors that have to be held in the mouth for appreciation. So chew your food and give your salivary glands a chance to function!

(TOM *deliberately lays his imaginary fork down and pushes his chair back from the table.*)

TOM: I haven't enjoyed one bite of this dinner because of your constant directions on how to eat it. It's you that make me rush through meals with your hawk-like attention to every bite I take. Sickening—spoils my appetite—all this discussion of—animals' secretion—salivary glands—mastication!

AMANDA (*lightly*): Temperament like a Metropolitan star! (*He rises and crosses downstage*) You're not excused from the table.

TOM: I'm getting a cigarette.

AMANDA: You smoke too much.

(LAURA *rises.*)

LAURA: I'll bring in the blanc mange.

(*He remains standing with his cigarette by the portieres during the following.*)

AMANDA (*rising*): No, sister, no, sister—you be the lady this time and I'll be the darky.

LAURA: I'm already up.

AMANDA: Resume your seat, little sister—I want you to stay fresh and pretty—for gentlemen callers!

LAURA: I'm not expecting any gentlemen callers.

AMANDA (*crossing out to kitchenette. Airily*): Sometimes they come when they are least expected! Why, I remember one Sunday afternoon in Blue Mountain—(*Enters kitchenette.*)

TOM: I know what's coming!

LAURA: Yes. But let her tell it.

TOM: Again?

LAURA: She loves to tell it.

(AMANDA *returns with bowl of dessert.*)

AMANDA: One Sunday afternoon in Blue Mountain—your mother received—*seventeen!*—gentlemen callers! Why, sometimes there weren't chairs enough to accommodate them all. We had to send the nigger over to bring in folding chairs from the parish house.

TOM (*remaining at portieres*): How did you entertain those gentlemen callers?

AMANDA: I understood the art of conversation!

TOM: I bet you could talk.

AMANDA: Girls in those days *knew* how to talk, I can tell you.

TOM: Yes?

(IMAGE: AMANDA AS A GIRL ON A PORCH, GREETING CALLERS.)

AMANDA: They knew how to entertain their gentlemen callers. It wasn't enough for a girl to be possessed of a pretty face and a graceful figure—although I wasn't slighted in either respect. She also needed to have a nimble wit and a tongue to meet all occasions.

TOM: What did you talk about?

AMANDA: Things of importance going on in the world! Never anything coarse or common or vulgar. (*She addresses* TOM *as though he were seated in the vacant chair at the table though he remains by portieres. He plays this scene as though he held the book*) My callers were gentlemen—all! Among my callers were some of the most prominent young planters of the Mississippi Delta—planters and sons of planters!

(TOM *motions for music and a spot of light on* AMANDA.)
(*Her eyes lift, her face glows, her voice becomes rich and elegiac.*)
(SCREEN LEGEND: "OU SONT LES NEIGES.")

There was young Champ Laughlin who later became vice-president of the Delta Planters Bank.

Hadley Stevenson who was drowned in Moon Lake and left his widow one hundred and fifty thousand in Government bonds.

There were the Cutrere brothers, Wesley and Bates. Bates was one of my bright particular beaux! He got in a quarrel with that wild Wainwright boy. They shot it out on the floor of Moon Lake Casino. Bates was shot through the stomach. Died in the ambulance on his way to Memphis. His widow was also well-provided for, came into eight or ten thousand acres, that's all. She married him on the rebound—never loved her—carried my picture on him the night he died!

And there was that boy that every girl in the Delta had set her cap for! That beautiful, brilliant young Fitzhugh boy from Greene County!

TOM: What did he leave his widow?

AMANDA: He never married! Gracious, you talk as though all of my old admirers had turned up their toes to the daisies!

TOM: Isn't this the first you've mentioned that still survives?

AMANDA: That Fitzhugh boy went North and made a fortune—came to be known as the Wolf of Wall Street! He had the Midas touch, whatever he touched turned to gold!

And I could have been Mrs. Duncan J. Fitzhugh, mind you! But —I picked your *father!*

LAURA (*rising*): Mother, let me clear the table.

AMANDA: No, dear, you go in front and study your typewriter chart. Or practice your shorthand a little. Stay fresh and pretty!—It's almost time for our gentlemen callers to start arriving. (*She flounces girlishly toward the kitchenette*) How many do you suppose we're going to entertain this afternoon?

(TOM *throws down the paper and jumps up with a groan.*)

LAURA (*alone in the dining room*): I don't believe we're going to receive any, Mother.

AMANDA (*reappearing, airily*): What? No one—not one? You must be joking! (LAURA *nervously echoes her laugh. She slips in a fugitive manner through the half-open portieres and draws them gently behind her. A shaft of very clear light is thrown on her face against the faded tapestry of the curtains.* MUSIC: "THE GLASS MENAGERIE" UNDER FAINTLY. *Lightly*) Not one gentleman caller? It can't be true! There must be a flood, there must have been a tornado!

LAURA: It isn't a flood, it's not a tornado, Mother. I'm just not popular like you were in Blue Mountain. . . . (TOM *utters another groan.* LAURA *glances at him with a faint, apologetic smile. Her voice catching a little*) Mother's afraid I'm going to be an old maid.

(*The Scene Dims Out with "Glass Menagerie" Music.*)

Scene Two

Laura, Haven't You Ever Liked Some Boy?"
On the dark stage the screen is lighted with the image of blue roses.

Gradually LAURA'S *figure becomes apparent and the screen goes out.*

The music subsides.

LAURA *is seated in the delicate ivory chair at the small clawfoot table.*

She wears a dress of soft violet material for a kimono—her hair tied back from her forehead with a ribbon.

She is washing and polishing her collection of glass.

AMANDA *appears on the fire-escape steps. At the sound of her ascent,* LAURA *catches her breath, thrusts the bowl of ornaments away and seats herself stiffly before the diagram of the typewriter keyboard as though it held her spellbound.*

Something has happened to AMANDA. *It is written in her face as she climbs to the landing: a look that is grim and hopeless and a little absurd.*

She has on one of those cheap or imitation velvety-looking cloth coats with imitation fur collar. Her hat is five or six years old, one of those dreadful cloche hats that were worn in the late twenties and she is clasping an enormous black patent-leather pocketbook with nickel clasps and initials. This is her full-dress outfit, the one she usually wears to the D.A.R.

Before entering she looks through the door.

She purses her lips, opens her eyes very wide, rolls them upward and shakes her head.

Then she slowly lets herself in the door. Seeing her mother's expression LAURA *touches her lips with a nervous gesture.*

LAURA: Hello, Mother, I was— (*She makes a nervous gesture toward the chart on the wall.* AMANDA *leans against the shut door and stares at* LAURA *with a martyred look.*)

AMANDA: Deception? Deception? (*She slowly removes her hat and gloves, continuing the sweet suffering stare. She lets the hat and gloves fall on the floor—a bit of acting.*)

LAURA (*shakily*): How was the D.A.R. meeting? (AMANDA *slowly opens her purse and removes a dainty white handkerchief which she shakes out delicately and delicately touches to her lips and nostrils*) Didn't you go to the D.A.R. meeting, Mother?

AMANDA (*faintly, almost inaudibly*): —No.—No. (*Then more forcibly*) I did not have the strength—to go to the D.A.R. In fact, I did not have the courage! I wanted to find a hole in the ground and hide myself in it forever! (*She crosses slowly to the wall and removes the diagram of the typewriter keyboard. She holds it in front of her for a second, staring at it sweetly and sorrowfully—then bites her lips and tears it in two pieces.*)

LAURA (*faintly*): Why did you do that, Mother? (AMANDA *repeats the same procedure with the chart of the Gregg Alphabet*) Why are you—

AMANDA: Why? Why? How old are you, Laura?

LAURA: Mother, you know my age.

AMANDA: I thought that you were an adult; it seems that I was mistaken. (*She crosses slowly to the sofa and sinks down and stares at* LAURA.)

LAURA: Please don't stare at me, Mother.

(AMANDA *closes her eyes and lowers her head. Count ten.*)

AMANDA: What are we going to do, what is going to become of us, what is the future?

(*Count ten.*)

LAURA: Has something happened, Mother? (AMANDA *draws a long breath and takes out the handkerchief again. Dabbing process*) Mother, has—something happened?

AMANDA: I'll be all right in a minute, I'm just bewildered—(*Count five*)—by life. . . .

LAURA: Mother, I wish that you would tell me what's happened!

AMANDA: As you know, I was supposed to be inducted into my office at the D.A.R. this afternoon. (IMAGE: A SWARM OF TYPEWRITERS) But I stopped off at Rubicam's Business College to speak to your teachers about your having a cold and ask them what progress they thought you were making down there.

LAURA: Oh. . . .

AMANDA: I went to the typing instructor and introduced myself as your mother. She didn't know who you were. Wingfield, she said. We don't have any such student enrolled at the school!

I assured her she did, that you had been going to classes since early in January.

"I wonder," she said, "if you could be talking about that terribly shy little girl who dropped out of school after only a few days' attendance?"

"No," I said, "Laura, my daughter, has been going to school every day for the past six weeks!"

"Excuse me," she said. She took the attendance book out and there was your name, unmistakably printed, and all the dates you were absent until they decided that you had dropped out of school.

I still said, "No, there must have been some mistake! There must have been some mix-up in the records!"

And she said, "No—I remember her perfectly now. Her hands shook so that she couldn't hit the right keys! The first time we gave a speed-test, she broke down completely—was sick at the stomach and almost had to be carried into the wash-room! After that morning she never showed up any more. We phoned the house but never got any answer"—while I was working at Famous and Barr, I suppose, demonstrating those— Oh!

I felt so weak I could barely keep on my feet!

I had to sit down while they got me a glass of water!

Fifty dollars' tuition, all of our plans—my hopes and ambitions for you—just gone up the spout, just gone up the spout like that.

(LAURA *draws a long breath and gets awkwardly to her feet. She crosses to the victrola and winds it up.*)

What are you doing?

LAURA: Oh! (*She releases the handle and returns to her seat.*)

AMANDA: Laura, where have you been going when you've gone out pretending that you were going to business college?

LAURA: I've just been going out walking.

AMANDA: That's not true.

LAURA: It is. I just went walking.

AMANDA: Walking? Walking? In winter? Deliberately courting pneumonia in that light coat? Where did you walk to, Laura?

LAURA: All sorts of places—mostly in the park.

AMANDA: Even after you'd started catching that cold?

LAURA: It was the lesser of two evils, Mother. (IMAGE: WINTER SCENE IN PARK) I couldn't go back up. I—threw up—on the floor!

AMANDA: From half past seven till after five every day you mean to tell me you walked around in the park, because you wanted to make me think that you were still going to Rubicam's Business College?

LAURA: It wasn't as bad as it sounds. I went inside places to get warmed up.

AMANDA: Inside where?

LAURA: I went in the art museum and the bird-houses at the Zoo. I visited the penguins every day! Sometimes I did without lunch and went to the movies. Lately I've been spending most of my afternoons in the Jewel-box, that big glass house where they raise the tropical flowers.

AMANDA: You did all this to deceive me, just for deception? (LAURA *looks down*) Why?

LAURA: Mother, when you're disappointed, you get that awful suffering look on your face, like the picture of Jesus' mother in the museum!

AMANDA: Hush!

LAURA: I couldn't face it.

(*Pause. A whisper of strings.*)
(LEGEND: "THE CRUST OF HUMILITY.")

AMANDA (*hopelessly fingering the huge pocketbook*): So what are we going to do the rest of our lives? Stay home and watch the pa-

rades go by? Amuse ourselves with the glass menagerie, darling? Eternally play those worn-out phonograph records your father left as a painful reminder of him?

We won't have a business career—we've given that up because it gave us nervous indigestion! (*Laughs wearily*) What is there left but dependency all our lives? I know so well what becomes of unmarried women who aren't prepared to occupy a position. I've seen such pitiful cases in the South—barely tolerated spinsters living upon the grudging patronage of sister's husband or brother's wife!—stuck away in some little mouse-trap of a room—encouraged by one in-law to visit another—little birdlike women without any nest—eating the crust of humility all their life!

Is that the future that we've mapped out for ourselves?

I swear it's the only alternative I can think of!

It isn't a very pleasant alternative, is it?

Of course—some girls *do marry*.

(LAURA *twists her hands nervously*.)

Haven't you ever liked some boy?

LAURA: Yes. I liked one once. (*Rises*) I came across his picture a while ago.

AMANDA (*with some interest*): He gave you his picture?

LAURA: No, it's in the year-book.

AMANDA (*disappointed*): Oh—a high-school boy.

(SCREEN IMAGE: JIM AS HIGH-SCHOOL HERO BEARING A SILVER CUP.)

LAURA: Yes. His name was Jim. (LAURA *lifts the heavy annual from the claw-foot table*) Here he is in *The Pirates of Penzance*.

AMANDA (*absently*): The what?

LAURA: The operetta the senior class put on. He had a wonderful voice and we sat across the aisle from each other Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays in the Aud. Here he is with the silver cup for debating! See his grin?

AMANDA (*absently*): He must have had a jolly disposition.

LAURA: He used to call me—Blue Roses.

(IMAGE: BLUE ROSES.)

AMANDA: Why did he call you such a name as that?

LAURA: When I had that attack of pleurosis—he asked me what was the matter when I came back. I said pleurosis—he thought that I said Blue Roses! So that's what he always called me after that. Whenever he saw me, he'd holler, "Hello, Blue Roses!" I didn't care for the girl that he went out with. Emily Meisenbach. Emily was the best-dressed girl at Soldan. She never struck me, though, as being sincere . . . It says in the Personal Section—they're engaged. That's —six years ago! They must be married by now.

AMANDA: Girls that aren't cut out for business careers usually wind up married to some nice man. (*Gets up with a spark of revival*) Sister, that's what you'll do!

(LAURA *utters a startled, doubtful laugh. She reaches quickly for a piece of glass.*)

LAURA: But, Mother—

AMANDA: Yes? (*Crossing to photograph.*)

LAURA (*in a tone of frightened apology*): I'm—crippled!

(IMAGE: SCREEN.)

AMANDA: Nonsense! Laura, I've told you never, never to use that word. Why, you're not crippled, you just have a little defect—hardly noticeable, even! When people have some slight disadvantage like that, they cultivate other things to make up for it—develop charm—and vivacity—and—*charm!* That's all you have to do! (*She turns again to the photograph*) One thing your father had *plenty of*—was *charm!*

(TOM *motions to the fiddle in the wings.*)

(*The Scene Fades Out with Music.*)

Scene Three

LEGEND ON SCREEN: "AFTER THE FIASCO—"
TOM *speaks from the fire-escape landing.*

TOM: After the fiasco at Rubicam's Business College, the idea of getting a gentleman caller for Laura began to play a more and more important part in Mother's calculations.

It became an obsession. Like some archetype of the universal unconscious, the image of the gentleman caller haunted our small apartment. . . .

(IMAGE: YOUNG MAN AT DOOR WITH FLOWERS.)

An evening at home rarely passed without some allusion to this image, this spectre, this hope. . . .

Even when he wasn't mentioned, his presence hung in Mother's preoccupied look and in my sister's frightened, apologetic manner—hung like a sentence passed upon the Wingfields!

Mother was a woman of action as well as words.

She began to take logical steps in the planned direction.

Late that winter and in the early spring—realizing that extra money would be needed to properly feather the nest and plume the bird—she conducted a vigorous campaign on the telephone, roping in subscribers to one of those magazines for matrons called *The Homemaker's Companion*, the type of journal that features the serialized sublimations of ladies of letters who think in terms of delicate cup-like breasts, slim, tapering waists, rich, creamy thighs, eyes like wood-smoke in autumn, fingers that soothe and caress like strains of music, bodies as powerful as Etruscan sculpture.

(SCREEN IMAGE: GLAMOR MAGAZINE COVER.)
(AMANDA *enters with phone on long extension cord. She is spotted in the dim stage.*)

AMANDA: Ida Scott? This is Amanda Wingfield!

We *missed* you at the D.A.R. last Monday!

I said to myself: She's probably suffering with that sinus condition! How is that sinus condition?

Horrors! Heaven have mercy!—You're a Christian martyr, yes, that's what you are, a Christian martyr!

Well, I just now happened to notice that your subscription to the *Companion's* about to expire! Yes, it expires with the next issue, honey!—just when that wonderful new serial by Bessie Mae Hopper is getting off to such an exciting start. Oh, honey, it's something that you can't miss! You remember how *Gone With the Wind* took everybody by storm? You simply couldn't go out if you hadn't read it. All everybody *talked* was Scarlett O'Hara. Well, this is a book that critics already compare to *Gone With the Wind*. It's the *Gone With the Wind* of the post-World War generation!—What?—Burning?—Oh, honey, don't let them burn, go take a look in the oven and I'll hold the wire! Heavens—I think she's hung up!

DIM OUT

(LEGEND ON SCREEN: "YOU THINK I'M IN LOVE WITH CONTINENTAL SHOEMAKERS?")

(*Before the stage is lighted, the violent voices of* TOM *and* AMANDA *are heard.*)

(*They are quarreling behind the portieres. In front of them stands* LAURA *with clenched hands and panicky expression.*)

(*A clear pool of light on her figure throughout this scene.*)

TOM: What in Christ's name am I—

AMANDA (*shrilly*): Don't you use that—

TOM: Supposed to do!

AMANDA: Expression! Not in my—

TOM: Ohhh!

AMANDA: Presence! Have you gone out of your senses?

TOM: I have, that's true, *driven* out!

AMANDA: What is the matter with you, you—big—big—IDIOT!

TOM: Look!—I've got *no thing*, no single thing—

AMANDA: Lower your voice!

TOM: In my life here that I can call my own! Everything is—

AMANDA: Stop that shouting!

TOM: Yesterday you confiscated my books! You had the nerve to—

AMANDA: I took that horrible novel back to the library—yes! That hideous book by that insane Mr. Lawrence. (TOM *laughs wildly*) I cannot control the output of diseased minds or people who cater to them— (TOM *laughs still more wildly*) BUT I WON'T ALLOW SUCH FILTH BROUGHT INTO MY HOUSE! No, no, no, no, no!

TOM: House, house! Who pays rent on it, who makes a slave of himself to—

AMANDA (*fairly screeching*): Don't you DARE to—

TOM: No, no, *I* mustn't say things! *I've* got to just—

AMANDA: Let me tell you—

TOM: I don't want to hear any more! (*He tears the portieres open. The upstage area is lit with a turgid smoky red glow.*)

(AMANDA'S *hair is in metal curlers and she wears a very old bathrobe, much too large for her slight figure, a relic of the faithless Mr. Wingfield.*)
(*An upright typewriter and a wild disarray of manuscripts is on the drop-leaf table. The quarrel was probably precipitated by* AMANDA'S *interruption of his creative labor. A chair lying overthrown on the floor.*)
(*Their gesticulating shadows are cast on the ceiling by the fiery glow.*)

AMANDA: You *will* hear more, you—

TOM: No, I won't hear more, I'm going out!

AMANDA: You come right back in—

TOM: Out, out, out! Because I'm—

AMANDA: Come back here, Tom Wingfield! I'm not through talking to you!

TOM: Oh, go—

LAURA (*desperately*): —Tom!

AMANDA: You're going to listen, and no more insolence from you! I'm at the end of my patience!

(*He comes back toward her.*)

TOM: What do you think I'm at? Aren't I supposed to have any patience to reach the end of, Mother? I know, I know. It seems unimportant to you, what I'm *doing*—what I *want* to do—having a little *difference* between them! You don't think that—

AMANDA: I think you've been doing things that you're ashamed of. That's why you act like this. I don't believe that you go every night to the movies. Nobody goes to the movies night after night. Nobody in their right minds goes to the movies as often as you pretend to. People don't go to the movies at nearly midnight, and movies don't let out at two A.M. Come in stumbling. Muttering to yourself like a maniac! You get three hours' sleep and then go to work. Oh, I can picture the way you're doing down there. Moping, doping, because you're in no condition.

TOM (*wildly*): No, I'm in no condition!

AMANDA: What right have you got to jeopardize your job? Jeopardize the security of us all? How do you think we'd manage if you were—

TOM: Listen! You think I'm crazy *about the warehouse?* (*He bends fiercely toward her slight figure*) You think I'm in love with the Continental Shoemakers? You think I want to spend fifty-five *years* down there in that—*celotex interior!* with—*fluorescent—tubes!* Look! I'd rather somebody picked up a crowbar and battered out my brains —than go back mornings! I *go!* Every time you come in yelling that God damn "*Rise and Shine!*" "*Rise and Shine!*" I say to myself, "How *lucky dead* people are!" But I get up. I *go!* For sixty-five dollars a month I give up all that I dream of doing and being *ever!* And you say self—*self's* all I ever think of. Why, listen, if self is what I thought of, Mother, I'd be where he is—GONE! (*Pointing to father's picture*) As far as the system of transportation reaches! (*He starts past her. She grabs his arm*) Don't grab at me, Mother!

AMANDA: Where are you going?

TOM: I'm going to the *movies!*

AMANDA: I don't believe that lie!

TOM (*crouching toward her, overtowering her tiny figure. She backs away, gasping*): I'm going to opium dens! Yes, opium dens, dens of vice and criminals' hang-outs, Mother. I've joined the Hogan gang, I'm a hired assassin, I carry a tommy-gun in a violin case! I run a string of cat-houses in the Valley! They call me Killer, Killer Wingfield, I'm leading a double-life, a simple, honest warehouse worker by day, by night a dynamic *czar* of the *underworld, Mother.* I go to gambling casinos, I spin away fortunes on the roulette table! I wear a patch over one eye and a false mustache, sometimes I put on green whiskers. On those occasions they call me—*El Diablo!* Oh, I could tell you things to make you sleepless! My enemies plan to dynamite this place. They're going to blow us all sky-high some night! I'll be glad, very happy, and so will you! You'll go up, up on a broomstick, over Blue Mountain with seventeen gentlemen callers! You ugly—babbling old—*witch. . . .* (*He goes through a series of violent, clumsy movements, seizing his overcoat, lunging to the door, pulling it fiercely open. The women watch him, aghast. His arm catches in the sleeve of the coat as he struggles to pull it on. For a moment he is pinioned by the bulky garment. With an outraged groan he tears the coat off again, splitting the shoulder of it, and hurls it across the room. It strikes against the shelf of* LAURA'S *glass collection, there is a tinkle of shattering glass.* LAURA *cries out as if wounded.*)

(MUSIC. LEGEND: "THE GLASS MENAGERIE.")

LAURA (*shrilly*): *My glass!*—menagerie. . . . (*She covers her face and turns away.*)

(*But* AMANDA *is still stunned and stupefied by the "ugly witch" so that she barely notices this occurrence. Now she recovers her speech.*)

AMANDA (*in an awful voice*): I won't speak to you—until you apologize! (*She crosses through portieres and draws them together behind her.* TOM *is left with* LAURA. LAURA *clings weakly to the mantel with her face averted.* TOM *stares at her stupidly for a moment. Then he crosses to shelf. Drops awkwardly on his knees to collect the fallen glass, glancing at* LAURA *as if he would speak but couldn't.*)

(*"The Glass Menagerie" steals in as*

The Scene Dims Out.)

Scene Four

The interior is dark. Faint light in the alley.

A deep-voiced bell in a church is tolling the hour of five as the scene commences.

TOM *appears at the top of the alley. After each solemn boom of the bell in the tower, he shakes a little noise-maker or rattle as if to express the tiny spasm of man in contrast to the sustained power and dignity of the Almighty. This and the unsteadiness of his advance make it evident that he has been drinking.*

As he climbs the few steps to the fire-escape landing light steals up inside. LAURA *appears in night-dress, observing* TOM'S *empty bed in the front room.*

TOM *fishes in his pockets for door-key, removing a motley assortment of articles in the search, including a perfect shower of movie-ticket stubs and an empty bottle. At last he finds the key, but just as he is about to insert it, it slips from his fingers. He strikes a match and crouches below the door.*

TOM (*bitterly*): One crack—and it falls through!

(LAURA *opens the door.*)

LAURA: Tom, Tom, what are you doing?

TOM: Looking for a door-key.

LAURA: Where have you been all this time?

TOM: I have been to the movies.

LAURA: All this time at the movies?

TOM: There was a very long program. There was a Garbo picture and a Mickey Mouse and a travelogue and a newsreel and a preview of coming attractions. And there was an organ solo and a collection for the milk-fund—simultaneously—which ended up in a terrible fight between a fat lady and an usher!

LAURA (*innocently*): Did you have to stay through everything?

TOM: Of course! And, oh, I forgot! There was a big stage show! The headliner on this stage show was Malvolio the Magician. He performed wonderful tricks, many of them, such as pouring water back and forth between pitchers. First it turned to wine and then it turned to beer and then it turned to whiskey. I know it was whiskey it finally turned into because he needed somebody to come up out of the audience to help him, and I came up—both shows! It was Kentucky Straight Bourbon. A very generous fellow, he gave souvenirs. (*He pulls from his back pocket a shimmering rainbow-colored scarf*) He gave me this. This is his magic scarf. You can have it, Laura. You wave it over a canary cage and you get a bowl of gold-fish. You wave it over the gold-fish bowl and they fly away canaries. . . . But the wonderfullest trick of all was the coffin trick. We nailed him into a coffin and he got out of the coffin without removing one nail. (*He has come inside*) There is a trick that would come in handy for me—get me out of this 2 by 4 situation! (*Flops onto bed and starts removing shoes.*)

LAURA: Tom—Shhh!

TOM: What're you shushing me for?

LAURA: You'll wake up Mother.

TOM: Goody, goody! Pay 'er back for all those "Rise an' Shines." (*Lies down, groaning*) You know it don't take much intelligence to get yourself into a nailed-up coffin, Laura. But who in hell ever got himself out of one without removing one nail?

(*As if in answer, the father's grinning photograph lights up.*)

SCENE DIMS OUT

(*Immediately following: The church bell is heard striking six. At the sixth stroke the alarm clock goes off in* AMANDA'S *room, and after a few moments we hear her calling: "Rise and Shine! Rise and Shine! Laura, go tell your brother to rise and shine!"*)

TOM (*sitting up slowly*): I'll rise—but I won't shine.

(*The light increases.*)

AMANDA: Laura, tell your brother his coffee is ready.

(LAURA *slips into front room.*)

LAURA: Tom!—It's nearly seven. Don't make Mother nervous. (*He stares at her stupidly. Beseechingly*) Tom, speak to Mother this morning. Make up with her, apologize, speak to her!

TOM: She won't to me. It's her that started not speaking.

LAURA: If you just say you're sorry she'll start speaking.

TOM: Her not speaking—is that such a tragedy?

LAURA: Please—please!

AMANDA (*calling from kitchenette*): Laura, are you going to do what I asked you to do, or do I have to get dressed and go out myself?

LAURA: Going, going—soon as I get on my coat! (*She pulls on a shapeless felt hat with nervous, jerky movement, pleadingly glancing at* TOM. *Rushes awkwardly for coat. The coat is one of* AMANDA'S, *inaccurately made-over, the sleeves too short for* LAURA) Butter and what else?

AMANDA (*entering upstage*): Just butter. Tell them to charge it.

LAURA: Mother, they make such faces when I do that.

AMANDA: Sticks and stones can break our bones, but the expression on Mr. Garfinkel's face won't harm us! Tell your brother his coffee is getting cold.

LAURA (*at door*): Do what I asked you, will you, will you, Tom?

(*He looks sullenly away.*)

AMANDA: Laura, go now or just don't go at all!

LAURA (*rushing out*): Going—going! (*A second later she cries out.* TOM *springs up and crosses to door.* AMANDA *rushes anxiously in.* TOM *opens the door.*)

TOM: Laura?

LAURA: I'm all right. I slipped, but I'm all right.

AMANDA (*peering anxiously after her*): If anyone breaks a leg on those fire-escape steps, the landlord ought to be sued for every cent he possesses! (*She shuts door. Remembers she isn't speaking and returns to other room.*)

(*As* TOM *enters listlessly for his coffee, she turns her back to him and stands rigidly facing the window on the gloomy gray vault of the areaway. Its light on her face with its aged but childish features is cruelly sharp, satirical as a Daumier print.*)
(MUSIC UNDER: "AVE MARIA.")
(TOM *glances sheepishly but sullenly at her averted figure and slumps at the table. The coffee is scalding hot; he sips it and gasps and spits it back in the cup. At his gasp,* AMANDA *catches her breath and half turns. Then catches herself and turns back to window.*)
(TOM *blows on his coffee, glancing sidewise at his mother. She clears her throat.* TOM *clears his. He starts to rise. Sinks back down again, scratches his head, clears his throat again.* AMANDA *coughs.* TOM *raises his cup in both hands to blow on it, his eyes staring over the rim of it at his mother for several moments. Then he slowly sets the cup down and awkwardly and hesitantly rises from the chair.*)

TOM (*hoarsely*): Mother. I—I apologize, Mother. (AMANDA *draws a quick, shuddering breath. Her face works grotesquely. She breaks into childlike tears*) I'm sorry for what I said, for everything that I said, I didn't mean it.

AMANDA (*sobbingly*): My devotion has made me a witch and so I make myself hateful to my children!

TOM: *No*, you *don't.*

AMANDA: I worry so much, don't sleep, it makes me nervous!

TOM (*gently*): I understand that.

AMANDA: I've had to put up a solitary battle all these years. But you're my right-hand bower! Don't fall down, don't fail!

TOM (*gently*): I try, Mother.

AMANDA (*with great enthusiasm*): Try and you will SUCCEED! (*The notion makes her breathless*) Why, you—you're just *full* of natural endowments! Both my children—they're *unusual* children! Don't you think I know it? I'm so—*proud!* Happy and—feel I've—so much to be thankful for but— Promise me one thing, Son!

TOM: What, Mother?

AMANDA: Promise, son, you'll—never be a drunkard!

TOM (*turns to her grinning*): I will never be a drunkard, Mother.

AMANDA: That's what frightened me so, that you'd be drinking! Eat a bowl of Purina!

TOM: Just coffee, Mother.

AMANDA: Shredded wheat biscuit?

TOM: No. No, Mother, just coffee.

AMANDA: You can't put in a day's work on an empty stomach. You've got ten minutes—don't gulp! Drinking too-hot liquids makes cancer of the stomach. . . . Put cream in.

TOM: No, thank you.

AMANDA: To cool it.

TOM: No! No, thank you, I want it black.

AMANDA: I know, but it's not good for you. We have to do all that we can to build ourselves up. In these trying times we live in, all that we have to cling to is—each other. . . . That's why it's so important to— Tom, I— I sent out your sister so I could discuss something with you. If you hadn't spoken I would have spoken to you. (*Sits down.*)

TOM (*gently*): What is it, Mother, that you want to discuss?

AMANDA: *Laura!*

(TOM *puts his cup down slowly.*)
(LEGEND ON SCREEN: "LAURA.")
(MUSIC: "THE GLASS MENAGERIE.")

TOM: —Oh.—Laura . . .

AMANDA (*touching his sleeve*): You know how Laura is. So quiet but—still water runs deep! She notices things and I think she—broods about them. (TOM *looks up*) A few days ago I came in and she was crying.

TOM: What about?

AMANDA: You.

TOM: Me?

AMANDA: She has an idea that you're not happy here.

TOM: What gave her that idea?

AMANDA: What gives her any idea? However, you do act strangely. I—I'm not criticizing, understand *that!* I know your ambitions do not lie in the warehouse, that like everybody in the whole wide world—you've had to—make sacrifices, but—Tom—Tom—life's not easy, it calls for—Spartan endurance! There's so many things in my heart that I cannot describe to you! I've never told you but I—*loved* your father. . . .

TOM (*gently*): I know that, Mother.

AMANDA: And you—when I see you taking after his ways! Staying out late—and—well, you *had* been drinking the night you were in that—terrifying condition! Laura says that you hate the apartment and that you go out nights to get away from it! Is that true, Tom?

TOM: No. You say there's so much in your heart that you can't describe to me. That's true of me, too. There's so much in my heart that I can't describe to *you!* So let's respect each other's—

AMANDA: But, why—*why*, Tom—are you always so *restless?* Where do you *go* to, nights?

TOM: I—go to the movies.

AMANDA: Why do you go to the movies so much, Tom?

TOM: I go to the movies because—I like adventure. Adventure is something I don't have much of at work, so I go to the movies.

AMANDA: But, Tom, you go to the movies *entirely* too *much!*

TOM: I like a lot of adventure.

(AMANDA *looks baffled, then hurt. As the familiar inquisition resumes he becomes hard and impatient again.* AMANDA *slips back into her querulous attitude toward him.*)
(IMAGE ON SCREEN: SAILING VESSEL WITH JOLLY ROGER.)

AMANDA: Most young men find adventure in their careers.

TOM: Then most young men are not employed in a warehouse.

AMANDA: The world is full of young men employed in warehouses and offices and factories.

TOM: Do all of them find adventure in their careers?

AMANDA: They do or they do without it! Not everybody has a craze for adventure.

TOM: Man is by instinct a lover, a hunter, a fighter, and none of those instincts are given much play at the warehouse!

AMANDA: Man is by instinct! Don't quote instinct to me! Instinct is something that people have got away from! It belongs to animals! Christian adults don't want it!

TOM: What do Christian adults want, then, Mother?

AMANDA: Superior things! Things of the mind and the spirit! Only animals have to satisfy instincts! Surely your aims are somewhat higher than theirs! Than monkeys—pigs—

TOM: I reckon they're not.

AMANDA: You're joking! However, that isn't what I wanted to discuss.

TOM (*rising*): I haven't much time.

AMANDA (*pushing his shoulders*): Sit down.

TOM: You want me to punch in red at the warehouse, Mother?

AMANDA: You have five minutes. I want to talk about Laura.

(LEGEND: "PLANS AND PROVISIONS.")

TOM: All right! What about Laura?

AMANDA: We have to be making some plans and provisions for her. She's older than you, two years, and nothing has happened. She just drifts along doing nothing. It frightens me terribly how she just drifts along.

TOM: I guess she's the type that people call home girls.

AMANDA: There's no such type, and if there is, it's a pity! That is unless the home is hers, with a husband!

TOM: What?

AMANDA: Oh, I can see the handwriting on the wall as plain as I see the nose in front of my face! It's terrifying!

More and more you remind me of your father! He was out all hours without explanation!—Then *left! Good-bye!*

And me with the bag to hold. I saw that letter you got from the Merchant Marine. I know what you're dreaming of. I'm not standing here blindfolded.

Very well, then. Then *do* it!

But not till there's somebody to take your place.

TOM: What do you mean?

AMANDA: I mean that as soon as Laura has got somebody to take care of her, married, a home of her own, independent—why, then you'll be free to go wherever you please, on land, on sea, whichever way the wind blows you!

But until that time you've got to look out for your sister. I don't say me because I'm old and don't matter! I say for your sister because she's young and dependent.

I put her in business college—a dismal failure! Frightened her so it made her sick at the stomach.

I took her over to the Young People's League at the church. Another fiasco. She spoke to nobody, nobody spoke to her. Now all she does is fool with those pieces of glass and play those worn-out records. What kind of a life is that for a girl to lead?

TOM: What can I do about it?

AMANDA: Overcome selfishness!

Self, self, self is all that you ever think of!

(TOM *springs up and crosses to get his coat. It is ugly and bulky. He pulls on a cap with earmuffs.*)

Where is your muffler? Put your wool muffler on!

(*He snatches it angrily from the closet and tosses it around his neck and pulls both ends tight.*)

Tom! I haven't said what I had in mind to ask you.

TOM: I'm too late to—

AMANDA (*catching his arm—very importunately. Then shyly*): Down at the warehouse, aren't there some—nice young men?

TOM: No!

AMANDA: There *must* be—*some* . . .

TOM: Mother—(*Gesture.*)

AMANDA: Find out one that's clean-living—doesn't drink and—ask him out for sister!

TOM: What?

AMANDA: For *sister!* To *meet!* Get *acquainted!*

TOM (*stamping to door*): Oh, my *go-osh!*

AMANDA: Will you? (*He opens door. Imploringly*) Will you? (*He starts down*) Will you? *Will* you, dear?

TOM (*calling back*): YES!

(AMANDA *closes the door hesitantly and with a troubled but faintly hopeful expression.*)
(SCREEN IMAGE: GLAMOR MAGAZINE COVER.)
(*Spot* AMANDA *at phone.*)

AMANDA: Ella Cartwright? This is Amanda Wingfield!
How are you, honey?
How is that kidney condition? (*Count five.*)
Horrors! (*Count five.*)
You're a Christian martyr, yes, honey, that's what you are, a Christian martyr!

Well, I just now happened to notice in my little red book that your subscription to the *Companion* has just run out! I knew that you wouldn't want to miss out on the wonderful serial starting in this new issue. It's by Bessie Mae Hopper, the first thing she's written since *Honeymoon for Three.*

Wasn't that a strange and interesting story? Well, this one is even lovelier, I believe. It has a sophisticated, society background. It's all about the horsey set on Long Island!

(*Fade Out.*)

Scene Five

LEGEND ON SCREEN: "ANNUNCIATION." *Fade with music.*

It is early dusk of a spring evening. Supper has just been finished in the Wingfield apartment. AMANDA *and* LAURA *in light-colored dresses are removing dishes from the table, in the upstage area, which is shadowy, their movements formalized almost as a dance or ritual, their moving forms as pale and silent as moths.*

TOM, *in white shirt and trousers, rises from the table and crosses toward the fire-escape.*

AMANDA (*as he passes her*): Son, will you do me a favor?

TOM: What?

AMANDA: Comb your hair! You look so pretty when your hair is combed! (TOM *slouches on sofa with evening paper. Enormous caption "Franco Triumphs"*) There is only one respect in which I would like you to emulate your father.

TOM: What respect is that?

AMANDA: The care he always took of his appearance. He never allowed himself to look untidy. (*He throws down the paper and crosses to fire-escape*) Where are you going?

TOM: I'm going out to smoke.

AMANDA: You smoke too much. A pack a day at fifteen cents a pack. How much would that amount to in a month? Thirty times fifteen is how much, Tom? Figure it out and you will be astounded at what you could save. Enough to give you a night-school course in accounting at Washington U! Just think what a wonderful thing that would be for you, Son!

(TOM *is unmoved by the thought.*)

TOM: I'd rather smoke. (*He steps out on landing, letting the screen door slam.*)

AMANDA (*sharply*): I know! That's the tragedy of it. . . . (*Alone, she turns to look at her husband's picture.*)

(DANCE MUSIC: "ALL THE WORLD IS WAITING FOR THE SUNRISE!")

TOM (*to the audience*): Across the alley from us was the Paradise Dance Hall. On evenings in spring the windows and doors were open and the music came outdoors. Sometimes the lights were turned out except for a large glass sphere that hung from the ceiling. It would turn slowly about and filter the dusk with delicate rainbow colors. Then the orchestra played a waltz or a tango, something that had a slow and sensuous rhythm. Couples would come outside, to the relative privacy of the alley. You could see them kissing behind ash-pits and telephone poles.

This was the compensation for lives that passed like mine, without any change or adventure.

Adventure and change were imminent in this year. They were waiting around the corner for all these kids.

Suspended in the mist over Berchtesgaden, caught in the folds of Chamberlain's umbrella—

In Spain there was Guernica!

But here there was only hot swing music and liquor, dance halls, bars, and movies, and sex that hung in the gloom like a chandelier and flooded the world with brief, deceptive rainbows. . . .

All the world was waiting for bombardments!

(AMANDA *turns from the picture and comes outside.*)

AMANDA (*sighing*): A fire-escape landing's a poor excuse for a porch. (*She spreads a newspaper on a step and sits down, gracefully and demurely as if she were settling into a swing on a Mississippi veranda*) What are you looking at?

TOM: The moon.

AMANDA: Is there a moon this evening?

TOM: It's rising over Garfinkel's Delicatessen.

AMANDA: So it is! A little silver slipper of a moon. Have you made a wish on it yet?

TOM: Um-hum.

AMANDA: What did you wish for?

TOM: That's a secret.

AMANDA: A secret, huh? Well, I won't tell mine either. I will be just as mysterious as you.

TOM: I bet I can guess what yours is.

AMANDA: Is my head so transparent?

TOM: You're not a sphinx.

AMANDA: No, I don't have secrets. I'll tell you what I wished for on the moon. Success and happiness for my precious children! I wish for that whenever there's a moon, and when there isn't a moon, I wish for it, too.

TOM: I thought perhaps you wished for a gentleman caller.

AMANDA: Why do you say that?

TOM: Don't you remember asking me to fetch one?

AMANDA: I remember suggesting that it would be nice for your sister if you brought home some nice young man from the warehouse. I think that I've made that suggestion more than once.

TOM: Yes, you have made it repeatedly.

AMANDA: Well?

TOM: We are going to have one.

AMANDA: *What?*

TOM: A gentleman caller!

(THE ANNUNCIATION IS CELEBRATED WITH MUSIC.)
(AMANDA *rises.*)
(IMAGE ON SCREEN: CALLER WITH BOUQUET.)

AMANDA: You mean you have asked some nice young man to come over?

TOM: Yep. I've asked him to dinner.

AMANDA: You really did?

TOM: I did!

AMANDA: You did, and did he—*accept?*

TOM: He did!

AMANDA: Well, well—well, well! That's—lovely!

TOM: I thought that you would be pleased.

AMANDA: It's definite, then?

TOM: Very definite.

AMANDA: Soon?

TOM: Very soon.

AMANDA: For heaven's sake, stop putting on and tell me some things, will you?

TOM: What things do you want me to tell you?

AMANDA: *Naturally* I would like to know when he's *coming!*

TOM: He's coming tomorrow.

AMANDA: *Tomorrow?*

TOM: Yep. Tomorrow.

AMANDA: But, Tom!

TOM: Yes, Mother?

AMANDA: Tomorrow gives me no time!

TOM: Time for what?

AMANDA: Preparations! Why didn't you phone me at once, as soon as you asked him, the minute that he accepted? Then, don't you see, I could have been getting ready!

TOM: You don't have to make any fuss.

AMANDA: Oh, Tom, Tom, Tom, of course I have to make a fuss! I want things nice, not sloppy! Not thrown together. I'll certainly have to do some fast thinking, won't I?

TOM: I don't see why you have to think at all.

AMANDA: You just don't know. We can't have a gentleman caller in a pig-sty! All my wedding silver has to be polished, the monogrammed table linen ought to be laundered! The windows have to be washed and fresh curtains put up. And how about clothes? We have to *wear* something, don't we?

TOM: Mother, this boy is no one to make a fuss over!

AMANDA: Do you realize he's the first young man we've introduced to your sister?

It's terrible, dreadful, disgraceful that poor little sister has never received a single gentleman caller! Tom, come inside! (*She opens the screen door.*)

TOM: What for?

AMANDA: I want to ask you some things.

TOM: If you're going to make such a fuss, I'll call it off, I'll tell him not to come!

AMANDA: You certainly won't do anything of the kind. Nothing offends people worse than broken engagements. It simply means I'll have to work like a Turk! We won't be brilliant, but we will pass inspection. Come on inside. (TOM *follows, groaning*) Sit down.

TOM: Any particular place you would like me to sit?

AMANDA: Thank heavens I've got that new sofa! I'm also making payments on a floor lamp I'll have sent out! And put the chintz covers on, they'll brighten things up! Of course I'd hoped to have these walls re-papered. . . . What is the young man's name?

TOM: His name is O'Connor.

AMANDA: That, of course, means fish—tomorrow is Friday! I'll have that salmon loaf—with Durkee's dressing! What does he do? He works at the warehouse?

TOM: Of course! How else would I—

AMANDA: Tom, he—doesn't drink?

TOM: Why do you ask me that?

AMANDA: Your father *did!*

TOM: Don't get started on that!

AMANDA: He *does* drink, then?

TOM: Not that I know of!

AMANDA: Make sure, be certain! The last thing I want for my daughter's a boy who drinks!

TOM: Aren't you being a little bit premature? Mr. O'Connor has not yet appeared on the scene!

AMANDA: But will tomorrow. To meet your sister, and what do I know about his character? Nothing! Old maids are better off than wives of drunkards!

TOM: Oh, my God!

AMANDA: Be still!

TOM (*leaning forward to whisper*): Lots of fellows meet girls whom they don't marry!

AMANDA: Oh, talk sensibly, Tom—and don't be sarcastic! (*She has gotten a hairbrush.*)

TOM: What are you doing?

AMANDA: I'm brushing that cow-lick down!
What is this young man's position at the warehouse?

TOM (*submitting grimly to the brush and the interrogation*): This young man's position is that of a shipping clerk, Mother.

AMANDA: Sounds to me like a fairly responsible job, the sort of a job *you* would be in if you just had more *get-up*.
What is his salary? Have you any idea?

TOM: I would judge it to be approximately eighty-five dollars a month.

AMANDA: Well—not princely, but—

TOM: Twenty more than I make.

AMANDA: Yes, how well I know! But for a family man, eighty-five dollars a month is not much more than you can just get by on. . . .

TOM: Yes, but Mr. O'Connor is not a family man.

AMANDA: He might be, mightn't he? Some time in the future?

TOM: I see. Plans and provisions.

AMANDA: You are the only young man that I know of who ignores the fact that the future becomes the present, the present the past, and the past turns into everlasting regret if you don't plan for it!

TOM: I will think that over and see what I can make of it.

AMANDA: Don't be supercilious with your mother! Tell me some more about this—what do you call him?

TOM: James D. O'Connor. The D. is for Delaney.

AMANDA: Irish on *both* sides! *Gracious!* And doesn't drink?

TOM: Shall I call him up and ask him right this minute?

AMANDA: The only way to find out about those things is to make discreet inquiries at the proper moment. When I was a girl in Blue Mountain and it was suspected that a young man drank, the girl whose attentions he had been receiving, if any girl *was*, would sometimes speak to the minister of his church, or rather her father would if her father was living, and sort of feel him out on the young man's character. That is the way such things are discreetly handled to keep a young woman from making a tragic mistake!

TOM: Then how did you happen to make a tragic mistake?

AMANDA: That innocent look of your father's had everyone fooled!
He *smiled*—the world was *enchanted!*
No girl can do worse than put herself at the mercy of a handsome appearance!
I hope that Mr. O'Connor is not too good-looking.

TOM: No, he's not too good-looking. He's covered with freckles and hasn't too much of a nose.

AMANDA: He's not right-down homely, though?

TOM: Not right-down homely. Just medium homely, I'd say.

AMANDA: Character's what to look for in a man.

TOM: That's what I've always said, Mother.

AMANDA: You've never said anything of the kind and I suspect you would never give it a thought.

TOM: Don't be so suspicious of me.

AMANDA: At least I hope he's the type that's up and coming.

TOM: I think he really goes in for self-improvement.

AMANDA: What reason have you to think so?

TOM: He goes to night school.

AMANDA (*beaming*): Splendid! What does he do, I mean study?

TOM: Radio engineering and public speaking!

AMANDA: Then he has visions of being advanced in the world!

Any young man who studies public speaking is aiming to have an executive job some day!

And radio engineering? A thing for the future!

Both of these facts are very illuminating. Those are the sort of things that a mother should know concerning any young man who comes to call on her daughter. Seriously or—not.

TOM: One little warning. He doesn't know about Laura. I didn't let on that we had dark ulterior motives. I just said, why don't you come and have dinner with us? He said okay and that was the whole conversation.

AMANDA: I bet it was! You're eloquent as an oyster.

However, he'll know about Laura when he gets here. When he sees how lovely and sweet and pretty she is, he'll thank his lucky stars he was asked to dinner.

TOM: Mother, you mustn't expect too much of Laura.

AMANDA: What do you mean?

TOM: Laura seems all those things to you and me because she's ours and we love her. We don't even notice she's crippled any more.

AMANDA: Don't say crippled! You know that I never allow that word to be used!

TOM: But face facts, Mother. She is and—that's not all—

AMANDA: What do you mean "not all"?

TOM: Laura is very different from other girls.

AMANDA: I think the difference is all to her advantage.

TOM: Not quite all—in the eyes of others—strangers—she's terribly shy and lives in a world of her own and those things make her seem a little peculiar to people outside the house.

AMANDA: Don't say peculiar.

TOM: Face the facts. She is.

(THE DANCE-HALL MUSIC CHANGES TO A TANGO THAT HAS A MINOR AND SOMEWHAT OMINOUS TONE.)

AMANDA: In what way is she peculiar—may I ask?

TOM (*gently*): She lives in a world of her own—a world of—little glass ornaments, Mother. . . . (*Gets up.* AMANDA *remains holding brush, looking at him, troubled*) She plays old phonograph records and—that's about all— (*He glances at himself in the mirror and crosses to door.*)

AMANDA (*sharply*): Where are you going?

TOM: I'm going to the movies. (*Out screen door.*)

AMANDA: Not to the movies, every night to the movies! (*Follows quickly to screen door*) I don't believe you always go to the movies! (*He is gone.* AMANDA *looks worriedly after him for a moment. Then vitality and optimism return and she turns from the door. Crossing to portieres*) Laura! Laura! (LAURA *answers from kitchenette.*)

LAURA: Yes, Mother.

AMANDA: Let those dishes go and come in front! (LAURA *appears with dish towel. Gaily*) Laura, come here and make a wish on the moon!

(SCREEN IMAGE: MOON.)

LAURA (*entering*): Moon—moon?

AMANDA: A little silver slipper of a moon.
Look over your left shoulder, Laura, and make a wish!

(LAURA *looks faintly puzzled as if called out of sleep.* AMANDA *seizes her shoulders and turns her at an angle by the door.*)

Now!
Now, darling, *wish!*

LAURA: What shall I wish for, Mother?

AMANDA (*her voice trembling and her eyes suddenly filling with tears*): Happiness! Good fortune!

(*The violin rises and the stage dims out.*)

(*The Curtain Falls.*)

Scene Six

IMAGE: HIGH SCHOOL HERO.

And so the following evening I brought Jim home to dinner. I had known Jim slightly in high school. In high school Jim was a hero. He had tremendous Irish good nature and vitality with the scrubbed and polished look of white chinaware. He seemed to move in a continual spotlight. He was a star in basketball, captain of the debating club, president of the senior class and the glee club and he sang the male lead in the annual light operas. He was always running or bounding, never just walking. He seemed always at the point of defeating the law of gravity. He was shooting with such velocity through his adolescence that you would logically expect him to arrive at nothing short of the White House by the time he was thirty. But Jim apparently ran into more interference after his graduation from Soldan. His speed had definitely slowed. Six years after he left high school he was holding a job that wasn't much better than mine.

(IMAGE: CLERK.)

He was the only one at the warehouse with whom I was on friendly terms. I was valuable to him as someone who could remember his former glory, who had seen him win basketball games and the silver cup in debating. He knew of my secret practice of retiring to a cabinet of the wash-room to work on poems when business was slack in the warehouse. He called me Shakespeare. And while the other boys in the warehouse regarded me with suspicious hostility, Jim took a humorous attitude toward me. Gradually his attitude affected the others, their hostility wore off and they also began to smile at me as people smile at an oddly fashioned dog who trots across their path at some distance.

I knew that Jim and Laura had known each other at Soldan, and I had heard Laura speak admiringly of his voice. I didn't know if Jim remembered her or not. In high school Laura had been as unobtrusive as Jim had been astonishing. If he did remember Laura, it was not as my sister, for when I asked him to dinner, he grinned

and said, "You know, Shakespeare, I never thought of you as having folks!"

He was about to discover that I did. . . .

(LIGHT UP STAGE.)
(LEGEND ON SCREEN: "THE ACCENT OF A COMING FOOT.")
(*Friday evening. It is about five o'clock of a late spring evening which comes "scattering poems in the sky."*)
(*A delicate lemony light is in the Wingfield apartment.*)
(AMANDA *has worked like a Turk in preparation for the gentleman caller. The results are astonishing. The new floor lamp with its rose-silk shade is in place, a colored paper lantern conceals the broken light fixture in the ceiling, new billowing white curtains are at the windows, chintz covers are on chairs and sofa, a pair of new sofa pillows make their initial appearance.*)
(*Open boxes and tissue paper are scattered on the floor.*)
(LAURA *stands in the middle with lifted arms while* AMANDA *crouches before her, adjusting the hem of the new dress, devout and ritualistic. The dress is colored and designed by memory. The arrangment of* LAURA'S *hair is changed; it is softer and more becoming. A fragile, unearthly prettiness has come out in* LAURA: *she is like a piece of translucent glass touched by light, given a momentary radiance, not actual, not lasting.*)

AMANDA (*impatiently*): Why are you trembling?

LAURA: Mother, you've made me so nervous!

AMANDA: How have I made you nervous?

LAURA: By all this fuss! You make it seem so important!

AMANDA: I don't understand you, Laura. You couldn't be satisfied with just sitting home, and yet whenever I try to arrange something for you, you seem to resist it.

(*She gets up.*)

Now take a look at yourself.
No, wait! Wait just a moment–I have an idea!

LAURA: What is it now?

(AMANDA *produces two powder puffs which she wraps in handkerchiefs and stuffs in* LAURA'S *bosom.*)

LAURA: Mother, what are you doing?

AMANDA: They call them "Gay Deceivers"!

LAURA: I won't wear them!

AMANDA: You will!

LAURA: Why should I?

AMANDA: Because, to be painfully honest, your chest is flat.

LAURA: You made it seem like we were setting a trap.

AMANDA: All pretty girls are a trap, a pretty trap, and men expect them to be.

(LEGEND: "A PRETTY TRAP.")

Now look at yourself, young lady. This is the prettiest you will ever be!

I've got to fix myself now! You're going to be surprised by your mother's appearance! (*She crosses through portieres, humming gaily.*)

(LAURA *moves slowly to the long mirror and stares solemnly at herself.*)

(*A wind blows the white curtains inward in a slow, graceful motion and with a faint, sorrowful sighing.*)

AMANDA (*off stage*): It isn't dark enough yet. (*She turns slowly before the mirror with a troubled look.*)

(LEGEND ON SCREEN: "THIS IS MY SISTER: CELEBRATE HER WITH STRINGS!" MUSIC.)

AMANDA (*laughing, off*): I'm going to show you something. I'm going to make a spectacular appearance!

LAURA: What is it, Mother?

AMANDA: Possess your soul in patience—you will see!

Something I've resurrected from that old trunk! Styles haven't changed so terribly much after all. . . .

(*She parts the portieres.*)

Now just look at your mother!

(*She wears a girlish frock of yellowed voile with a blue silk sash. She carries a bunch of jonquils—the legend of her youth is nearly revived. Feverishly.*)

This is the dress in which I led the cotillion. Won the cakewalk twice at Sunset Hill, wore one spring to the Governor's ball in Jackson!

See how I sashayed around the ballroom, Laura?

(*She raises her skirt and does a mincing step around the room.*)

I wore it on Sundays for my gentlemen callers! I had it on the day I met your father—

I had malaria fever all that spring. The change of climate from East Tennessee to the Delta—weakened resistance—I had a little temperature all the time—not enough to be serious—just enough to make me restless and giddy!—Invitations poured in—parties all over the Delta!—"Stay in bed," said Mother, "you have fever!"—but I just wouldn't.—I took quinine but kept on going, going!—Evenings, dances!—Afternoons, long, long rides! Picnics—lovely!—So lovely, that country in May.—All lacy with dogwood, literally flooded with jonquils!—That was the spring I had the craze for jonquils. Jonquils became an absolute obsession. Mother said, "Honey, there's no more room for jonquils." And still I kept on bringing in more jonquils. Whenever, wherever I saw them, I'd say, "Stop! Stop! I see jonquils!" I made the young men help me gather the jonquils! It was a joke, Amanda and her jonquils! Finally there were no more vases to hold them, every available space was filled with jonquils. No vases to hold them? All right, I'll hold them myself! And then I—(*She stops in front of the picture.* MUSIC) met your father!

Malaria fever and jonquils and then—this—boy. . . .

(*She switches on the rose-colored lamp.*)

I hope they get here before it starts to rain.

(*She crosses upstage and places the jonquils in bowl on table.*)

I gave your brother a little extra change so he and Mr. O'Connor could take the service car home.

LAURA (*with altered look*): What did you say his name was?

AMANDA: O'Connor.

LAURA: What is his first name?

AMANDA: I don't remember. Oh, yes, I do. It was—Jim!

(LAURA *sways slightly and catches hold of a chair.*)
(LEGEND ON SCREEN: "NOT JIM!")

LAURA (*faintly*): Not—Jim

AMANDA: Yes, that was it, it was Jim! I've never known a Jim that wasn't nice!

(MUSIC: OMINOUS.)

LAURA: Are you sure his name is Jim O'Connor?

AMANDA: Yes. Why?

LAURA: Is he the one that Tom used to know in high school?

AMANDA: He didn't say so. I think he just got to know him at the warehouse.

LAURA: There was a Jim O'Connor we both knew in high school—(*Then, with effort*) If that is the one that Tom is bringing to dinner—you'll have to excuse me, I won't come to the table.

AMANDA: What sort of nonsense is this?

LAURA: You asked me once if I'd ever liked a boy. Don't you remember I showed you this boy's picture?

AMANDA: You mean the boy you showed me in the year book?

LAURA: Yes, that boy.

AMANDA: Laura, Laura, were you in love with that boy?

LAURA: I don't know, Mother. All I know is I couldn't sit at the table if it was him!

AMANDA: It won't be him! It isn't the least bit likely. But whether it is or not, you will come to the table. You will not be excused.

LAURA: I'll have to be, Mother.

AMANDA: I don't intend to humor your silliness, Laura. I've had too much from you and your brother, both!

So just sit down and compose yourself till they come. Tom has forgotten his key so you'll have to let them in, when they arrive.

LAURA (*panicky*): Oh, Mother—*you* answer the door!

AMANDA (*lightly*): I'll be in the kitchen—busy!

LAURA: Oh, Mother, please answer the door, don't make me do it!

AMANDA (*crossing into kitchenette*): I've got to fix the dressing for the salmon. Fuss, fuss—silliness!—over a gentleman caller!

(*Door swings shut.* LAURA *is left alone.*)
(LEGEND: "TERROR!")
(*She utters a low moan and turns off the lamp—sits stiffly on the edge of the sofa, knotting her fingers together.*)
(LEGEND ON SCREEN: "THE OPENING OF A DOOR!")
(TOM *and* JIM *appear on the fire-escape steps and climb to landing. Hearing their approach,* LAURA *rises with a panicky gesture. She retreats to the portieres.*)
(*The doorbell.* LAURA *catches her breath and touches her throat. Low drums.*)

AMANDA (*calling*): Laura, sweetheart! The door!

(LAURA *stares at it without moving.*)

JIM: I think we just beat the rain.

TOM: Uh-huh. (*He rings again, nervously.* JIM *whistles and fishes for a cigarette.*)

AMANDA (*very, very gaily*): Laura, that is your brother and Mr. O'Connor! Will you let them in, darling?

(LAURA *crosses toward kitchenette door.*)

LAURA (*breathlessly*): Mother—you go to the door!

(AMANDA *steps out of kitchenette and stares furiously at* LAURA. *She points imperiously at the door.*)

LAURA: Please, please!

AMANDA (*in a fierce whisper*): What is the matter with you, you silly thing?

LAURA (*desperately*): Please, you answer it, *please!*

AMANDA: I told you I wasn't going to humor you, Laura. Why have you chosen this moment to lose your mind?

LAURA: Please, please, please, you go!

AMANDA: You'll have to go to the door because I can't!

LAURA (*despairingly*): I can't either!

AMANDA: *Why?*

LAURA: I'm *sick!*

AMANDA: I'm sick, too—of your nonsense! Why can't you and your brother be normal people? Fantastic whims and behavior!

(TOM *gives a long ring.*)

Preposterous goings on! Can you give me one reason—(*Calls out lyrically*) COMING! JUST ONE SECOND!—why you should be afraid to open a door? Now you answer it, Laura!

LAURA: Oh, oh, oh . . . (*She returns through the portieres. Darts to the victrola and winds it frantically and turns it on.*)

AMANDA: Laura Wingfield, you march right to that door!

LAURA: Yes—yes, Mother!

(*A faraway, scratchy rendition of "Dardanella" softens the air and gives her strength to move through it. She slips to the door and draws it cautiously open.*)
(TOM *enters with the caller,* JIM O'CONNOR.)

TOM: Laura, this is Jim. Jim, this is my sister, Laura.

JIM (*stepping inside*): I didn't know that Shakespeare had a sister!

LAURA (*retreating stiff and trembling from the door*): How—how do you do?

JIM (*heartily extending his hand*): Okay!

(LAURA *touches it hesitantly with hers.*)

JIM: Your hand's *cold,* Laura!

LAURA: Yes, well—I've been playing the victrola. . . .

JIM: Must have been playing classical music on it! You ought to play a little hot swing music to warm you up!

LAURA: Excuse me—I haven't finished playing the victrola. . .

(*She turns awkwardly and hurries into the front room. She pauses a second by the victrola. Then catches her breath and darts through the portieres like a frightened deer.*)

JIM (*grinning*): What was the matter?

TOM: Oh—with Laura? Laura is—terribly shy.

JIM: Shy, huh? It's unusual to meet a shy girl nowadays. I don't believe you ever mentioned you had a sister.

TOM: Well, now you know. I have one. Here is the *Post Dispatch.* You want a piece of it?

JIM: Uh-huh.

TOM: What piece? The comics?

JIM: Sports! (*Glances at it*) Ole Dizzy Dean is on his bad behavior.

TOM (*disinterest*): Yeah? (*Lights cigarette and crosses back to fire-escape door.*)

JIM: Where are *you* going?

TOM: I'm going out on the terrace.

JIM (*goes after him*): You know, Shakespeare—I'm going to sell you a bill of goods!

TOM: What goods?

JIM: A course I'm taking.

TOM: Huh?

JIM: In public speaking! You and me, we're not the warehouse type.

TOM: Thanks—that's good news.
But what has public speaking got to do with it?

JIM: It fits you for—executive positions!

TOM: Awww.

JIM: I tell you it's done a helluva lot for me.

(IMAGE: EXECUTIVE AT DESK.)

TOM: In what respect?

JIM: In every! Ask yourself what is the difference between you an' me and men in the office down front? Brains?—No!—Ability? —No! Then what? Just one little thing—

TOM: What is that one little thing?

JIM: Primarily it amounts to—social poise! Being able to square up to people and hold your own on any social level!

AMANDA (*off stage*): Tom?

TOM: Yes, Mother?

AMANDA: Is that you and Mr. O'Connor?

TOM: Yes, Mother.

AMANDA: Well, you just make yourselves comfortable in there.

TOM: Yes, Mother.

AMANDA: Ask Mr. O'Connor if he would like to wash his hands.

JIM: Aw, no—no—thank you—I took care of that at the warehouse. Tom—

TOM: Yes?

JIM: Mr. Mendoza was speaking to me about you.

TOM: Favorably?

JIM: What do you think?

TOM: Well—

JIM: You're going to be out of a job if you don't wake up.

TOM: I am waking up—

JIM: You show no signs.

TOM: The signs are interior.

(IMAGE ON SCREEN: THE SAILING VESSEL WITH JOLLY ROGER AGAIN.)

TOM: I'm planning to change. (*He leans over the rail speaking with quiet exhilaration. The incandescent marquees and signs of the first-run movie houses light his face from across the alley. He looks like a voyager*) I'm right at the point of committing myself to a future that doesn't include the warehouse and Mr. Mendoza or even a night-school course in public speaking.

JIM: What are you gassing about?

TOM: I'm tired of the movies.

JIM: Movies!

TOM: Yes, movies! Look at them— (*A wave toward the marvels of Grand Avenue*) All of those glamorous people—having adventures —hogging it all, gobbling the whole thing up! You know what happens? People go to the *movies* instead of *moving!* Hollywood characters are supposed to have all the adventures for everybody in America, while everybody in America sits in a dark room and watches them have them! Yes, until there's a war. That's when adventure becomes available to the masses! *Everyone's* dish, not only Gable's! Then the people in the dark room come out of the dark room to have some adventures themselves—Goody, goody!—It's our turn now, to go to the South Sea Island—to make a safari—to be exotic, far-off!—But I'm not patient. I don't want to wait till then. I'm tired of the *movies* and I am *about* to *move!*

JIM (*incredulously*): Move?

TOM: Yes.

JIM: When?

TOM: Soon!

JIM: Where? Where?

(THEME THREE MUSIC SEEMS TO ANSWER THE QUESTION, WHILE TOM THINKS IT OVER. HE SEARCHES AMONG HIS POCKETS.)

TOM: I'm starting to boil inside. I know I seem dreamy, but inside—well, I'm boiling!—Whenever I pick up a shoe, I shudder a little thinking how short life is and what I am doing!—Whatever that means, I know it doesn't mean shoes—except as something to wear on a traveler's feet! (*Finds paper*) Look—

JIM: What?

TOM: I'm a member.

JIM (*reading*): The Union of Merchant Seamen.

TOM: I paid my dues this month, instead of the light bill.

JIM: You will regret it when they turn the lights off.

TOM: I won't be here.

JIM: How about your mother?

TOM: I'm like my father. The bastard son of a bastard! See how he grins? And he's been absent going on sixteen years!

JIM: You're just talking, you drip. How does your mother feel about it?

TOM: Shhh!—Here comes Mother! Mother is not acquainted with my plans!

AMANDA (*enters portieres*): Where are you all?

TOM: On the terrace, Mother.

(*They start inside. She advances to them.* TOM *is distinctly shocked at her appearance. Even* JIM *blinks a little. He is making his first contact with girlish Southern vivacity and in spite of the night-school course in public speaking is somewhat thrown off the beam by the unexpected outlay of social charm.*)
(*Certain responses are attempted by* JIM *but are swept aside by* AMANDA'S *gay laughter and chatter.* TOM *is embarrassed but after the first shock* JIM *reacts very warmly. Grins and chuckles, is altogether won over.*)
(IMAGE: AMANDA AS A GIRL.)

AMANDA (*coyly smiling, shaking her girlish ringlets*): Well, well, well, so this is Mr. O'Connor. Introductions entirely unnecessary. I've heard so much about you from my boy. I finally said to him, Tom—good gracious!—why don't you bring this paragon to supper? I'd like to meet this nice young man at the warehouse!—Instead of just hearing him sing your praises so much!

I don't know why my son is so stand-offish—that's not Southern behavior!

Let's sit down and—I think we could stand a little more air in here! Tom, leave the door open. I felt a nice fresh breeze a moment ago. Where has it gone to?

Mmm, so warm already! And not quite summer, even. We're going to burn up when summer really gets started.

However, we're having—we're having a very light supper. I think light things are better fo' this time of year. The same as light clothes are. Light clothes an' light food are what warm weather calls fo'. You know our blood gets so thick during th' winter—it takes a while fo' us to *adjust* ou'selves!—when the season changes . . .

It's come so quick this year. I wasn't prepared. All of a sudden—heavens! Already summer!—I ran to the trunk an' pulled out this light dress— Terribly old! Historical almost! But feels so good—so good an' co-ol, y' know. . . .

TOM: Mother—

AMANDA: Yes, honey?

TOM: How about—supper?

AMANDA: Honey, you go ask Sister if supper is ready! You know that Sister is in full charge of supper!

Tell her you hungry boys are waiting for it.

(*To* JIM.)

Have you met Laura?

JIM: She—

AMANDA: Let you in? Oh, good, you've met already! It's rare for a girl as sweet an' pretty as Laura to be domestic! But Laura is, thank heavens, not only pretty but also very domestic. I'm not at all. I never was a bit. I never could make a thing but angel-food cake. Well, in the South we had so many servants. Gone, gone, gone. All vestige of gracious living! Gone completely! I wasn't prepared for what the future brought me. All of my gentlemen callers were sons of planters and so of course I assumed that I would be married to one and raise my family on a large piece of land with plenty of servants. But man proposes—and woman accepts the proposal!—To vary that old, old saying a little bit—I married no planter! I married a man who worked for the telephone company!—That gallantly smiling gentleman over there! (*Points to the picture*) A

telephone man who—fell in love with long-distance!—Now he travels and I don't even know where!—But what am I going on for about my—tribulations?

Tell me yours—I hope you don't have any!

Tom?

TOM (*returning*): Yes, Mother?

AMANDA: Is supper nearly ready?

TOM: It looks to me like supper is on the table.

AMANDA: Let me look— (*She rises prettily and looks through portieres*) Oh, lovely!—But where is Sister?

TOM: Laura is not feeling well and she says that she thinks she'd better not come to the table.

AMANDA: What?—Nonsense!—Laura? Oh, Laura!

LAURA (*off stage, faintly*): Yes, Mother.

AMANDA: You really must come to the table. We won't be seated until you come to the table!

Come in, Mr. O'Connor. You sit over there, and I'll—

Laura? Laura Wingfield!

You're keeping us waiting, honey! We can't say grace until you come to the table!

(*The back door is pushed weakly open and* LAURA *comes in. She is obviously quite faint, her lips trembling, her eyes wide and staring. She moves unsteadily toward the table.*)

(LEGEND: "TERROR!")

(*Outside a summer storm is coming abruptly. The white curtains billow inward at the windows and there is a sorrowful murmur and deep blue dusk.*)

(LAURA *suddenly stumbles—she catches at a chair with a faint moan.*)

TOM: Laura!

AMANDA: Laura!

(*There is a clap of thunder.*)

(LEGEND: "AH!")

(*Despairingly*)

Why, Laura, you *are* sick, darling! Tom, help your sister into the living room, dear!

Sit in the living room, Laura—rest on the sofa.

Well!

(*To the gentleman caller.*)

Standing over the hot stove made her ill!—I told her that it was just too warm this evening, but—

(TOM *comes back in.* LAURA *is on the sofa.*)

Is Laura all right now?

TOM: Yes.

AMANDA: What *is* that? Rain? A nice cool rain has come up!

(*She gives the gentleman caller a frightened look.*)

I think we may—have grace—now . . .

(TOM *looks at her stupidly.*)

Tom, honey—you say grace!

TOM: Oh . . .

"For these and all thy mercies—"

(*They bow their heads,* AMANDA *stealing a nervous glance at* JIM. *In the living room* LAURA, *stretched on the sofa, clenches her hand to her lips, to hold back a shuddering sob.*)

God's Holy Name be praised—

(*The Scene Dims Out.*)

Scene Seven

A Souvenir.

Half an hour later. Dinner is just being finished in the upstage area which is concealed by the drawn portieres.

As the curtain rises LAURA *is still huddled upon the sofa, her feet drawn under her, her head resting on a pale blue pillow, her eyes wide and mysteriously watchful. The new floor lamp with its shade of rose-colored silk gives a soft, becoming light to her face, bringing out the fragile, unearthly prettiness which usually escapes attention. There is a steady murmur of rain, but it is slackening and stops soon after the scene begins; the air outside becomes pale and luminous as the moon breaks out.*

A moment after the curtain rises, the lights in both rooms flicker and go out.

JIM: Hey, there, Mr. Light Bulb!

(AMANDA *laughs nervously.*)
(LEGEND: "SUSPENSION OF A PUBLIC SERVICE.")

AMANDA: Where was Moses when the lights went out? Ha-ha. Do you know the answer to that one, Mr. O'Connor?

JIM: No, Ma'am, what's the answer?

AMANDA: In the dark!

(JIM *laughs appreciatively.*)

Everybody sit still. I'll light the candles. Isn't it lucky we have them on the table? Where's a match? Which of you gentlemen can provide a match?

JIM: Here.

AMANDA: Thank you, sir.

JIM: Not at all, Ma'am!

AMANDA: I guess the fuse has burnt out. Mr. O'Connor, can you tell a burnt-out fuse? I know I can't and Tom is a total loss when it comes to mechanics.

(SOUND: GETTING UP: VOICES RECEDE A LITTLE TO KITCHENETTE.)

Oh, be careful you don't bump into something. We don't want our gentleman caller to break his neck. Now wouldn't that be a fine howdy-do?

JIM: Ha-ha!
Where is the fuse-box?

AMANDA: Right here next to the stove. Can you see anything?

JIM: Just a minute.

AMANDA: Isn't electricity a mysterious thing?
Wasn't it Benjamin Franklin who tied a key to a kite?
We live in such a mysterious universe, don't we? Some people say that science clears up all the mysteries for us. In my opinion it only creates more!
Have you found it yet?

JIM: No Ma'am. All these fuses look okay to me.

AMANDA: Tom!

TOM: Yes, Mother?

AMANDA: That light bill I gave you several days ago. The one I told you we got the notices about?

(LEGEND: "HA!")

TOM: Oh.—Yeah.

AMANDA: You didn't neglect to pay it by any chance?

TOM: Why, I—

AMANDA: Didn't! I might have know it!

JIM: Shakespeare probably wrote a poem on that light bill, Mrs. Wingfield.

AMANDA: I might have known better than to trust him with it! There's such a high price for negligence in this world!

JIM: Maybe the poem will win a ten-dollar prize.

AMANDA: We'll just have to spend the remainder of the evening in the nineteenth century, before Mr. Edison made the Mazda lamp!

JIM: Candlelight is my favorite kind of light.

AMANDA: That shows you're romantic! But that's no excuse for Tom.

Well, we got through dinner. Very considerate of them to let us get through dinner before they plunged us into everlasting darkness, wasn't it, Mr. O'Connor?

JIM: Ha-ha!

AMANDA: Tom, as a penalty for your carelessness you can help me with the dishes.

JIM: Let me give you a hand.

AMANDA: Indeed you will not!

JIM: I ought to be good for something.

AMANDA: Good for something? (*Her tone is rhapsodic.*)

You? Why, Mr. O'Connor, nobody, *nobody's* given me this much entertainment in years—as you have!

JIM: Aw, now, Mrs. Wingfield!

AMANDA: I'm not exaggerating, not one bit! But Sister is all by her lonesome. You go keep her company in the parlor!

I'll give you this lovely old candelabrum that used to be on the altar at the church of the Heavenly Rest. It was melted a little out of shape when the church burnt down. Lightning struck it one spring. Gypsy Jones was holding a revival at the time and he intimated that the church was destroyed because the Episcopalians gave card parties.

JIM: Ha-ha!

AMANDA: And how about you coaxing Sister to drink a little wine? I think it would be good for her! Can you carry both at once?

JIM: Sure. I'm Superman!

AMANDA: Now, Thomas, get into this apron!

(*The door of kitchenette swings closed on* AMANDA'S *gay laughter; the flickering light approaches the portieres.*)
(LAURA *sits up nervously as he enters. Her speech at first is low and breathless from the almost intolerable strain of being alone with a stranger.*)
(THE LEGEND: "I DON'T SUPPOSE YOU REMEMBER ME AT ALL!")
(*In her first speeches in this scene, before* JIM'S *warmth overcomes her paralyzing shyness,* LAURA'S *voice is thin and breathless as though she has just run up a steep flight of stairs.*)
(JIM'S *attitude is gently humorous. In playing this scene it should be stressed that while the incident is apparently unimportant, it is to* LAURA *the climax of her secret life.*)

JIM: Hello, there, Laura.

LAURA (*faintly*): Hello. (*She clears her throat.*)

JIM: How are you feeling now? Better?

LAURA: Yes. Yes, thank you.

JIM: This is for you. A little dandelion wine. (*He extends it toward her with extravagant gallantry.*)

LAURA: Thank you.

JIM: Drink it—but don't get drunk!

(*He laughs heartily.* LAURA *takes the glass uncertainly; laughs shyly.*)

Where shall I set the candles?

LAURA: Oh—oh, anywhere . . .

JIM: How about here on the floor? Any objections?

LAURA: No.

JIM: I'll spread a newspaper under to catch the drippings. I like to sit on the floor. Mind if I do?

LAURA: Oh, no.

JIM: Give me a pillow?

LAURA: What?

JIM: A pillow!

LAURA: Oh . . . (*Hands him one quickly.*)

JIM: How about you? Don't you like to sit on the floor?

LAURA: Oh—yes.

JIM: Why don't you, then?

LAURA: I—will.

JIM: Take a pillow! (LAURA *does. Sits on the other side of the candelabrum.* JIM *crosses his legs and smiles engagingly at her*) I can't hardly see you sitting way over there.

LAURA: I can—see you.

JIM: I know, but that's not fair, I'm in the limelight. (LAURA *moves her pillow closer*) Good! Now I can see you! Comfortable?

LAURA: Yes.

JIM: So am I. Comfortable as a cow! Will you have some gum?

LAURA: No, thank you.

JIM: I think that I will indulge, with your permission. (*Musingly unwraps it and holds it up*) Think of the fortune made by the guy that invented the first piece of chewing gum. Amazing, huh? The Wrigley Building is one of the sights of Chicago.—I saw it summer before last when I went up to the Century of Progress. Did you take in the Century of Progress?

LAURA: No, I didn't.

JIM: Well, it was quite a wonderful exposition. What impressed me most was the Hall of Science. Gives you an idea of what the future will be in America, even more wonderful than the present time is! (*Pause. Smiling at her*) Your brother tells me you're shy. Is that right, Laura?

LAURA: I—don't know.

JIM: I judge you to be an old-fashioned type of girl. Well, I think that's a pretty good type to be. Hope you don't think I'm being too personal—do you?

LAURA (*hastily, out of embarrassment*): I believe I *will* take a piece of gum, if you—don't mind. (*Clearing her throat*) Mr. O'Connor, have you—kept up with your singing?

JIM: Singing? Me?

LAURA: Yes. I remember what a beautiful voice you had.

JIM: When did you hear me sing?

(VOICE OFF STAGE IN THE PAUSE.)

VOICE (*off stage*):

O blow, ye winds, heigh-ho,
A-roving I will go!
I'm off to my love
With a boxing glove—
Ten thousand miles away!

JIM: You say you've heard me sing?

LAURA: Oh, yes! Yes, very often . . . I—don't suppose—you remember me—at all?

JIM (*smiling doubtfully*): You know I have an idea I've seen you before. I had that idea soon as you opened the door. It seemed almost like I was about to remember your name. But the name that I started to call you—wasn't a name! And so I stopped myself before I said it.

LAURA: Wasn't it—Blue Roses?

JIM (*springs up. Grinning*): Blue Roses!—My gosh, yes—Blue Roses!

That's what I had on my tongue when you opened the door!

Isn't it funny what tricks your memory plays? I didn't connect you with high school somehow or other.

But that's where it was; it was high school. I didn't even know you were Shakespeare's sister!

Gosh, I'm sorry.

LAURA: I didn't expect you to. You—barely knew me!

JIM: But we did have a speaking acquaintance, huh?

LAURA: Yes, we—spoke to each other.

JIM: When did you recognize me?

LAURA: Oh, right away!

JIM: Soon as I came in the door?

LAURA: When I heard your name I thought it was probably you. I knew that Tom used to know you a little in high school. So when you came in the door—
Well, then I was—sure.

JIM: Why didn't you *say* something, then?

LAURA (*breathlessly*): I didn't know what to say, I was—too surprised!

JIM: For goodness' sakes! You know, this sure is funny!

LAURA: Yes! Yes, isn't it, though . . .

JIM: Didn't we have a class in something together?

LAURA: Yes, we did.

JIM: What class was that?

LAURA: It was—singing—Chorus!

JIM: Aw!

LAURA: I sat across the aisle from you in the Aud.

JIM: Aw.

LAURA: Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

JIM: Now I remember—you always came in late.

LAURA: Yes, it was so hard for me, getting upstairs. I had that brace on my leg—it clumped so loud!

JIM: I never heard any clumping.

LAURA (*wincing at the recollection*): To me it sounded like—thunder!

JIM: Well, well, well, I never even noticed.

LAURA: And everybody was seated before I came in. I had to walk in front of all those people. My seat was in the back row. I had to go clumping all the way up the aisle with everyone watching!

JIM: You shouldn't have been self-conscious.

LAURA: I know, but I was. It was always such a relief when the singing started.

JIM: Aw, yes, I've placed you now! I used to call you Blue Roses. How was it that I got started calling you that?

LAURA: I was out of school a little while with pleurosis. When I came back you asked me what was the matter. I said I had pleurosis—you thought I said Blue Roses. That's what you always called me after that!

JIM: I hope you didn't mind.

LAURA: Oh, no—I liked it. You see, I wasn't acquainted with many—people. . . .

JIM: As I remember you sort of stuck by yourself.

LAURA: I—I—never have had much luck at—making friends.

JIM: I don't see why you wouldn't.

LAURA: Well, I—started out badly.

JIM: You mean being—

LAURA: Yes, it sort of—stood between me—

JIM: You shouldn't have let it!

LAURA: I know, but it did, and—

JIM: You were shy with people!

LAURA: I tried not to be but never could—

JIM: Overcome it?

LAURA: No, I—I never could!

JIM: I guess being shy is something you have to work out of kind of gradually.

LAURA (*sorrowfully*): Yes—I guess it—

JIM: Takes time!

LAURA: Yes.

JIM: People are not so dreadful when you know them. That's what you have to remember! And everybody has problems, not just you, but practically everybody has got some problems.

You think of yourself as having the only problems, as being the only one who is disappointed. But just look around you and you will see lots of people as disappointed as you are. For instance, I hoped when I was going to high school that I would be further along at this time, six years later, than I am now— You remember that wonderful write-up I had in *The Torch?*

LAURA: Yes! (*She rises and crosses to table.*)

JIM: It said I was bound to succeed in anything I went into! (*Laura returns with the annual*) Holy Jeez! *The Torch!* (*He accepts it reverently. They smile across it with mutual wonder.* LAURA *crouches beside him and they begin to turn through it.* LAURA'S *shyness is dissolving in his warmth.*)

LAURA: Here you are in *The Pirates of Penzance!*

JIM (*wistfully*): I sang the baritone lead in that operetta.

LAURA (*raptly*): So—*beautifully!*

JIM (*protesting*): Aw—

LAURA: Yes, yes—beautifully—beautifully!

JIM: You heard me?

LAURA: All three times!

JIM: No!

LAURA: Yes!

JIM: All three performances?

LAURA (*looking down*): Yes.

JIM: Why?

LAURA: I—wanted to ask you to—autograph my program.

JIM: Why didn't you ask me to?

LAURA: You were always surrounded by your own friends so much that I never had a chance to.

JIM: You should have just—

LAURA: Well, I—thought you might think I was—

JIM: Thought I might think you was—what?

LAURA: Oh—

JIM (*with reflective relish*): I was beleaguered by females in those days.

LAURA: You were terribly popular!

JIM: Yeah—

LAURA: You had such a—friendly way—

JIM: I was spoiled in high school.

LAURA: Everybody—liked you!

JIM: Including you?

LAURA: I—yes, I—I did, too— (*She gently closes the book in her lap.*)

JIM: Well, well, well!—Give me that program, Laura. (*She hands it to him. He signs it with a flourish*) There you are—better late than never!

LAURA: Oh, I—what a—surprise!

JIM: My signature isn't worth very much right now.
But some day—maybe—it will increase in value!
Being disappointed is one thing and being discouraged is something else. I am disappointed but I am not discouraged.
I'm twenty-three years old.
How old are you?

LAURA: I'll be twenty-four in June.

JIM: That's not old age!

LAURA: No, but—

JIM: You finished high school?

LAURA (*with difficulty*): I didn't go back.

JIM: You mean you dropped out?

LAURA: I made bad grades in my final examinations. (*She rises and replaces the book and the program. Her voice strained*) How is—Emily Meisenbach getting along?

JIM: Oh, that kraut-head!

LAURA: Why do you call her that?

JIM: That's what she was.

LAURA: You're not still—going with her?

JIM: I never see her.

LAURA: It said in the Personal Section that you were—engaged!

JIM: I know, but I wasn't impressed by that—propaganda!

LAURA: It wasn't—the truth?

JIM: Only in Emily's optimistic opinion!

LAURA: Oh—

(LEGEND: "WHAT HAVE YOU DONE SINCE HIGH SCHOOL?")
(JIM *lights a cigarette and leans indolently back on his elbows smiling at* LAURA *with a warmth and charm which lights her inwardly with altar candles. She remains by the table and turns in her hands a piece of glass to cover her tumult.*)

JIM (*after several reflective puffs on a cigarette*): What have you done since high school? (*She seems not to hear him*) Huh? (LAURA *looks up*) I said what have you done since high school, Laura?

LAURA: Nothing much.

JIM: You must have been doing something these six long years.

LAURA: Yes.

JIM: Well, then, such as what?

LAURA: I took a business course at business college—

JIM: How did that work out?

LAURA: Well, not very—well—I had to drop out, it gave me—indigestion—

(JIM *laughs gently.*)

JIM: What are you doing now?

LAURA: I don't do anything—much. Oh, please don't think I sit around doing nothing! My glass collection takes up a good deal of time. Glass is something you have to take good care of.

JIM: What did you say—about glass?

LAURA: Collection I said—I have one— (*She clears her throat and turns away again, acutely shy.*)

JIM (*abruptly*): You know what I judge to be the trouble with you?

Inferiority complex! Know what that is? That's what they call it when someone low-rates himself!

I understand it because I had it, too. Although my case was not so aggravated as yours seems to be. I had it until I took up public speaking, developed my voice, and learned that I had an aptitude for science. Before that time I never thought of myself as being outstanding in any way whatsoever!

Now I've never made a regular study of it, but I have a friend who says I can analyze people better than doctors that make a profession of it. I don't claim that to be necessarily true, but I can sure guess a person's psychology. Laura! (*Takes out his gum*) Excuse me, Laura. I always take it out when the flavor is gone. I'll use this scrap of paper to wrap it in. I know how it is to get it stuck on a shoe.

Yep—that's what I judge to be your principal trouble. A lack of confidence in yourself as a person. You don't have the proper amount of faith in yourself. I'm basing that fact on a number of your remarks and also on certain observations I've made. For instance that clumping you thought was so awful in high school. You say that you even dreaded to walk into class. You see what you did? You dropped out of school, you gave up an education because of a clump, which as far as I know was practically non-existent! A little physical defect is what you have. Hardly noticeable even! Magnified thousands of times by imagination!

You know what my strong advice to you is? Think of yourself as *superior* in some way!

LAURA: In what way would I think?

JIM: Why, man alive, Laura! Just look about you a little. What do you see? A world full of common people! All of 'em born and all of 'em going to die!

Which of them has one-tenth of your good points! Or mine! Or anyone else's, as far as that goes—Gosh!

Everybody excels in some one thing. Some in many!

(*Unconsciously glances at himself in the mirror.*)

All you've got to do is discover in *what!*
Take me, for instance.

(*He adjusts his tie at the mirror.*)

My interest happens to lie in electro-dynamics. I'm taking a course in radio engineering at night school, Laura, on top of a fairly responsible job at the warehouse. I'm taking that course and studying public speaking.

LAURA: Ohhhh.

JIM: Because I believe in the future of television!

(*Turning back to her.*)

I wish to be ready to go up right along with it. Therefore I'm planning to get in on the ground floor. In fact I've already made the right connections and all that remains is for the industry itself to get under way! Full steam—

(*His eyes are starry.*)

Knowledge—Zzzzzp! *Money*—Zzzzzzp!—*Power!*
That's the cycle democracy is built on!

(*His attitude is convincingly dynamic.* LAURA *stares at him, even her shyness eclipsed in her absolute wonder. He suddenly grins.*)

I guess you think I think a lot of myself!

LAURA: No—o-o-o, I—

JIM: Now how about you? Isn't there something you take more interest in than anything else?

LAURA: Well, I do—as I said—have my—glass collection—

(*A peal of girlish laughter from the kitchen.*)

JIM: I'm not right sure I know what you're talking about.
What kind of glass is it?

LAURA: Little articles of it, they're ornaments mostly!
Most of them are little animals made out of glass, the tiniest little animals in the world. Mother calls them a glass menagerie!
Here's an example of one, if you'd like to see it!
This one is one of the oldest. It's nearly thirteen.

(MUSIC: "THE GLASS MENAGERIE.")
(*He stretches out his hand.*)

Oh, be careful—if you breathe, it breaks!

JIM: I'd better not take it. I'm pretty clumsy with things.

LAURA: Go on, I trust you with him!

(*Places it in his palm.*)

There now—you're holding him gently!
Hold him over the light, he loves the light! You see how the light shines through him?

JIM: It sure does shine!

LAURA: I shouldn't be partial, but he is my favorite one.

JIM: What kind of a thing is this one supposed to be?

LAURA: Haven't you noticed the single horn on his forehead?

JIM: A unicorn, huh?

LAURA: Mmm-hmmm!

JIM: Unicorns, aren't they extinct in the modern world?

LAURA: I know!

JIM: Poor little fellow, he must feel sort of lonesome.

LAURA (*smiling*): Well, if he does he doesn't complain about it. He stays on a shelf with some horses that don't have horns and all of them seem to get along nicely together.

JIM: How do you know?

LAURA (*lightly*): I haven't heard any arguments among them!

JIM (*grinning*): No arguments, huh? Well, that's a pretty good sign! Where shall I set him?

LAURA: Put him on the table. They all like a change of scenery once in a while!

JIM (*stretching*): Well, well, well, well—
Look how big my shadow is when I stretch!

LAURA: Oh, oh, yes—it stretches across the ceiling!

JIM (*crossing to door*): I think it's stopped raining. (*Opens fire-escape door*) Where does the music come from?

LAURA: From the Paradise Dance Hall across the alley.

JIM: How about cutting the rug a little, Miss Wingfield?

LAURA: Oh, I—

JIM: Or is your program filled up? Let me have a look at it. (*Grasps imaginary card*) Why, every dance is taken! I'll just have to scratch some out. (WALTZ MUSIC: "LA GOLONDRINA") Ahhh, a waltz! (*He executes some sweeping turns by himself then holds his arms toward* LAURA.)

LAURA (*breathlessly*): I—can't dance!

JIM: There you go, that inferiority stuff!

LAURA: I've never danced in my life!

JIM: Come on, try!

LAURA: Oh, but I'd step on you!

JIM: I'm not made out of glass.

LAURA: How—how—how do we start?

JIM: Just leave it to me. You hold your arms out a little.

LAURA: Like this?

JIM: A little bit higher. Right. Now don't tighten up, that's the main thing about it—relax.

LAURA (*laughing breathlessly*): It's hard not to.

JIM: Okay.

LAURA: I'm afraid you can't budge me.

JIM: What do you bet I can't (*He swings her into motion.*)

LAURA: Goodness, yes, you can!

JIM: Let yourself go, now, Laura, just let yourself go.

LAURA: I'm—

JIM: Come on!

LAURA: Trying!

JIM: Not so stiff— Easy does it!

LAURA: I know but I'm—

JIM: Loosen th' backbone! There now, that's a lot better.

LAURA: Am I?

JIM: Lots, lots better! (*He moves her about the room in a clumsy waltz.*)

LAURA: Oh, my!

JIM: Ha-ha!

LAURA: Oh, my goodness!

JIM: Ha-ha-ha! (*They suddenly bump into the table.* JIM *stops*) What did we hit on?

LAURA: Table.

JIM: Did something fall off it? I think—

LAURA: Yes.

JIM: I hope it wasn't the little glass horse with the horn!

LAURA: Yes.

JIM: Aw, aw, aw. Is it broken?

LAURA: Now it is just like all the other horses.

JIM: It's lost its–

LAURA: Horn!
It doesn't matter. Maybe it's a blessing in disguise.

JIM: You'll never forgive me. I bet that that was your favorite piece of glass.

LAURA: I don't have favorites much. It's no tragedy, Freckles. Glass breaks so easily. No matter how careful you are. The traffic jars the shelves and things fall off them.

JIM: Still I'm awfully sorry that I was the cause.

LAURA (*smiling*): I'll just imagine he had an operation.
The horn was removed to make him feel less–freakish!

(*They both laugh.*)

Now he will feel more at home with the other horses, the ones that don't have horns. . .

JIM: Ha-ha, that's very funny!

(*Suddenly serious.*)

I'm glad to see that you have a sense of humor.
You know–you're–well–very different!
Surprisingly different from anyone else I know!

(*His voice becomes soft and hesitant with a genuine feeling.*)

Do you mind me telling you that?

(LAURA *is abashed beyond speech.*)

I mean it in a nice way . . .

(LAURA *nods shyly, looking away.*)

You make me feel sort of–I don't know how to put it!
I'm usually pretty good at expressing things, but–
This is something that I don't know how to say!

(LAURA *touches her throat and clears it–turns the broken unicorn in her hands.*)
(*Even softer.*)

Has anyone ever told you that you were pretty?

(PAUSE: MUSIC.)
(LAURA *looks up slowly, with wonder, and shakes her head.*)

Well, you are! In a very different way from anyone else.
And all the nicer because of the difference, too.

(*His voice becomes low and husky.* LAURA *turns away, nearly faint with the novelty of her emotions.*)

I wish that you were my sister. I'd teach you to have some confidence in yourself. The different people are not like other people, but being different is nothing to be ashamed of. Because other people are not such wonderful people. They're one hundred times one thousand. You're one times one! They walk all over the earth. You just stay here. They're common as—weeds, but—you—well, you're —*Blue Roses!*

(IMAGE ON SCREEN: BLUE ROSES.)
(MUSIC CHANGES.)

LAURA: But blue is wrong for—roses . . .

JIM: It's right for you!—You're—pretty!

LAURA: In what respect am I pretty?

JIM: In all respects—believe me! Your eyes—your hair—are pretty! Your hands are pretty!

(*He catches hold of her hand.*)

You think I'm making this up because I'm invited to dinner and have to be nice. Oh, I could do that! I could put on an act for you, Laura, and say lots of things without being very sincere. But this time I am. I'm talking to you sincerely. I happened to notice you had this inferiority complex that keeps you from feeling comfortable with people. Somebody needs to build your confidence up and make you proud instead of shy and turning away and—blushing—
Somebody—ought to—
Ought to—*kiss* you, Laura!

(*His hand slips slowly up her arm to her shoulder.*)
(MUSIC SWELLS TUMULTUOUSLY.)

(*He suddenly turns her about and kisses her on the lips.*)
(*When he releases her,* LAURA *sinks on the sofa with a bright, dazed look.*)
(JIM *backs away and fishes in his pocket for a cigarette.*)
(LEGEND ON SCREEN: "SOUVENIR.")

Stumble-john!

(*He lights the cigarette, avoiding her look.*)
(*There is a peal of girlish laughter from* AMANDA *in the kitchen.*)
(LAURA *slowly raises and opens her hand. It still contains the little broken glass animal. She looks at it with a tender, bewildered expression.*)

Stumble-john!
I shouldn't have done that— That was way off the beam. You don't smoke, do you?

(*She looks up, smiling, not hearing the question.*)
(*He sits beside her a little gingerly. She looks at him speechlessly —waiting.*)
(*He coughs decorously and moves a little farther aside as he considers the situation and senses her feelings, dimly, with perturbation.*)
(*Gently.*)

Would you—care for a—mint?

(*She doesn't seem to hear him but her look grows brighter even.*)

Peppermint—Life-Saver?
My pocket's a regular drug store—wherever I go . . .

(*He pops a mint in his mouth. Then gulps and decides to make a clean breast of it. He speaks slowly and gingerly.*)

Laura, you know, if I had a sister like you, I'd do the same thing as Tom. I'd bring out fellows and—introduce her to them. The right type of boys of a type to—appreciate her.
Only—well—he made a mistake about me.
Maybe I've got no call to be saying this. That may not have been the idea in having me over. But what if it was?
There's nothing wrong about that. The only trouble is that in my case—I'm not in a situation to—do the right thing.
I can't take down your number and say I'll phone.
I can't call up next week and—ask for a date.
I thought I had better explain the situation in case you—misunderstood it and—hurt your feelings. . . .

(*Pause.*)
(*Slowly, very slowly,* LAURA'S *look changes, her eyes returning slowly from his to the ornament in her palm.*)
(AMANDA *utters another gay laugh in the kitchen.*)

LAURA (*faintly*): You—won't—call again?

JIM: No, Laura, I can't.

(*He rises from the sofa.*)

As I was just explaining, I've—got strings on me.
Laura, I've—been going steady!
I go out all of the time with a girl named Betty. She's a home-girl like you, and Catholic, and Irish, and in a great many ways we —get along fine.
I met her last summer on a moonlight boat trip up the river to Alton, on the *Majestic*.
Well—right away from the start it was—love!

(LEGEND: LOVE!)
(LAURA *sways slightly forward and grips the arm of the sofa. He fails to notice, now enrapt in his own comfortable being.*)

Being in love has made a new man of me!

(*Leaning stiffly forward, clutching the arm of the sofa,* LAURA *struggles visibly with her storm. But* JIM *is oblivious, she is a long way off.*)

The power of love is really pretty tremendous!
Love is something that—changes the whole world, Laura!

(*The storm abates a little and* LAURA *leans back. He notices her again.*)

It happened that Betty's aunt took sick, she got a wire and had to go to Centralia. So Tom—when he asked me to dinner—I naturally just accepted the invitation, not knowing that you—that he —that I—

(*He stops awkwardly.*)

Huh—I'm a stumble-john!

(*He flops back on the sofa.*)
(*The holy candles in the altar of* LAURA'S *face have been snuffed out. There is a look of almost infinite desolation.*)
(JIM *glances at her uneasily.*)

I wish that you would—say something. (*She bites her lip which was trembling and then bravely smiles. She opens her hand again on the broken glass ornament. Then she gently takes his hand and raises it level with her own. She carefully places the unicorn in the palm of his hand, then pushes his fingers closed upon it*) What are you—doing that for? You want me to have him?—Laura? (*She nods*) What for?

LAURA: A—souvenir . . .

(*She rises unsteadily and crouches beside the victrola to wind it up.*)
(LEGEND ON SCREEN: "THINGS HAVE A WAY OF TURNING OUT SO BADLY!")
(OR IMAGE: "GENTLEMAN CALLER WAVING GOOD-BYE!—GAILY.")
(*At this moment* AMANDA *rushes brightly back in the front room. She bears a pitcher of fruit punch in an old-fashioned cut-glass pitcher and a plate of macaroons. The plate has a gold border and poppies painted on it.*)

AMANDA: Well, well, well! Isn't the air delightful after the shower? I've made you children a little liquid refreshment.

(*Turns gaily to the gentleman caller*)

Jim, do you know that song about lemonade?

"Lemonade, lemonade
Made in the shade and stirred with a spade—
Good enough for any old maid!"

JIM (*uneasily*): Ha-ha! No—I never heard it.

AMANDA: Why, Laura! You look so serious!

JIM: We were having a serious conversation.

AMANDA: Good! Now you're better acquainted!

JIM (*uncertainly*): Ha-ha! Yes.

AMANDA: You modern young people are much more serious-minded than my generation. I was so gay as a girl!

JIM: You haven't changed, Mrs. Wingfield.

AMANDA: Tonight I'm rejuvenated! The gaiety of the occasion, Mr. O'Connor!

(*She tosses her head with a peal of laughter. Spills lemonade.*)

Oooo! I'm baptizing myself!

JIM: Here—let me—

AMANDA (*setting the pitcher down*): There now. I discovered we had some maraschino cherries. I dumped them in, juice and all!

JIM: You shouldn't have gone to that trouble, Mrs. Wingfield.

AMANDA: Trouble, trouble? Why, it was loads of fun!

Didn't you hear me cutting up in the kitchen? I bet your ears were burning! I told Tom how outdone with him I was for keeping you to himself so long a time! He should have brought you over much, much sooner! Well, now that you've found your way, I want you to be a very frequent caller! Not just occasional but all the time.

Oh, we're going to have a lot of gay times together! I see them coming!

Mmm, just breathe that air! So fresh, and the moon's so pretty!

I'll skip back out—I know where my place is when young folks are having a—serious conversation!

JIM: Oh, don't go out, Mrs. Wingfield. The fact of the matter is I've got to be going.

AMANDA: Going, now? You're joking! Why, it's only the shank of the evening, Mr. O'Connor!

JIM: Well, you know how it is.

AMANDA: You mean you're a young workingman and have to keep workingmen's hours. We'll let you off early tonight. But only on the condition that next time you stay later.

What's the best night for you? Isn't Saturday night the best night for you workingmen?

JIM: I have a couple of time-clocks to punch, Mrs. Wingfield. One at morning, another one at night!

AMANDA: My, but you *are* ambitious! You work at night, too?

JIM: No, Ma'am, not work but—Betty! (*He crosses deliberately to pick up his hat. The band at the Paradise Dance Hall goes into a tender waltz.*)

AMANDA: Betty? Betty? Who's—Betty!

(*There is an ominous cracking sound in the sky.*)

JIM: Oh, just a girl. The girl I go steady with! (*He smiles charmingly. The sky falls.*)

(LEGEND: "THE SKY FALLS.")

AMANDA (*a long-drawn exhalation*): Ohhhh . . . Is it a serious romance, Mr. O'Connor?

JIM: We're going to be married the second Sunday in June.

AMANDA: Ohhhh—how nice!
Tom didn't mention that you were engaged to be married.

JIM: The cat's not out of the bag at the warehouse yet.
You know how they are. They call you Romeo and stuff like that.

(*He stops at the oval mirror to put on his hat. He carefully shapes the brim and the crown to give a discreetly dashing effect.*)

It's been a wonderful evening, Mrs. Wingfield. I guess this is what they mean by Southern hospitality.

AMANDA: It really wasn't anything at all.

JIM: I hope it don't seem like I'm rushing off. But I promised Betty I'd pick her up at the Wabash depot, an' by the time I get my jalopy down there her train'll be in. Some women are pretty upset if you keep 'em waiting.

AMANDA: Yes, I know— The tyranny of women!

(*Extends her hand.*)

Good-bye, Mr. O'Connor.
I wish you luck—and happiness—and success! All three of them, and so does Laura!—Don't you, Laura?

LAURA: Yes!

JIM (*taking her hand*): Good-bye, Laura. I'm certainly going to treasure that souvenir. And don't you forget the good advice I gave you.

(*Raises his voice to a cheery shout.*)

So long, Shakespeare!
Thanks again, ladies— Good night!

(*He grins and ducks jauntily out.*)
(*Still bravely grimacing,* AMANDA *closes the door on the gentleman caller. Then she turns back to the room with a puzzled expression. She and* LAURA *don't dare to face each other.* LAURA *crouches beside the victrola to wind it.*)

AMANDA (*faintly*): Things have a way of turning out so badly.
I don't believe that I would play the victrola.
Well, well—well—
Our gentleman caller was engaged to be married!
Tom!

TOM (*from back*): Yes, Mother?

AMANDA: Come in here a minute. I want to tell you something awfully funny.

TOM (*enters with macaroon and a glass of the lemonade*): Has the gentleman caller gotten away already?

AMANDA: The gentleman caller has made an early departure.
What a wonderful joke you played on us!

TOM: How do you mean?

AMANDA: You didn't mention that he was engaged to be married.

TOM: Jim? Engaged?

AMANDA: That's what he just informed us.

TOM: I'll be jiggered! I didn't know about that.

AMANDA: That seems very peculiar.

TOM: What's peculiar about it?

AMANDA: Didn't you call him your best friend down at the warehouse?

TOM: He is, but how did I know?

AMANDA: It seems extremely peculiar that you wouldn't know your best friend was going to be married!

TOM: The warehouse is where I work, not where I know things about people!

AMANDA: You don't know things anywhere! You live in a dream; you manufacture illusions!

(*He crosses to door.*)

Where are you going?

TOM: I'm going to the movies.

AMANDA: That's right, now that you've had us make such fools of ourselves. The effort, the preparations, all the expense! The new floor lamp, the rug, the clothes for Laura! All for what? To entertain some other girl's fiancé!

Go to the movies, go! Don't think about us, a mother deserted, an unmarried sister who's crippled and has no job! Don't let anything interfere with your selfish pleasure!

Just go, go, go—to the movies!

TOM: All right, I will! The more you shout about my selfishness to me the quicker I'll go, and I won't go to the movies!

AMANDA: Go, then! Then go to the moon—you selfish dreamer!

(TOM *smashes his glass on the floor. He plunges out on the fire-escape, slamming the door.* LAURA *screams—cut by door.*)
(*Dance-hall music up.* TOM *goes to the rail and grips it desperately, lifting his face in the chill white moonlight penetrating the narrow abyss of the alley.*)
(LEGEND ON SCREEN: "AND SO GOOD-BYE . . .")
(TOM'S *closing speech is timed with the interior pantomime. The interior scene is played as though viewed through soundproof glass.* AMANDA *appears to be making a comforting speech to* LAURA *who is huddled upon the sofa. Now that we cannot hear the mother's speech, her silliness is gone and she has dignity and tragic beauty.* LAURA'S *dark hair hides her face until at the end of the speech she lifts it to smile at her mother.* AMANDA'S *gestures are slow and graceful, almost dancelike, as she comforts the daughter. At the end of*

her speech she glances a moment at the father's picture—then withdraws through the portieres. At close of TOM'S *speech,* LAURA *blows out the candles, ending the play.*)

TOM: I didn't go to the moon, I went much further—for time is the longest distance between two places—

Not long after that I was fired for writing a poem on the lid of a shoe-box.

I left Saint Louis. I descended the steps of this fire-escape for a last time and followed, from then on, in my father's footsteps, attempting to find in motion what was lost in space—

I traveled around a great deal. The cities swept about me like dead leaves, leaves that were brightly colored but torn away from the branches.

I would have stopped, but I was pursued by something.

It always came upon me unawares, taking me altogether by surprise. Perhaps it was a familiar bit of music. Perhaps it was only a piece of transparent glass—

Perhaps I am walking along a street at night, in some strange city, before I have found companions. I pass the lighted window of a shop where perfume is sold. The window is filled with pieces of colored glass, tiny transparent bottles in delicate colors, like bits of a shattered rainbow.

Then all at once my sister touches my shoulder. I turn around and look into her eyes . . .

Oh, Laura, Laura, I tried to leave you behind me, but I am more faithful than I intended to be!

I reach for a cigarette, I cross the street, I run into the movies or a bar, I buy a drink, I speak to the nearest stranger—anything that can blow your candles out!

(LAURA *bends over the candles.*)

—for nowadays the world is lit by lightning! Blow out your candles, Laura—and so good-bye. . . .

(*She blows the candles out.*)

(*The Scene Dissolves.*)

It would be futile to seek the literary value or dramatic appeal of *The Glass Menagerie* in a paraphrase of a plot in which the most important event is the arrival of a guest for dinner. Although only a few seemingly trivial moments in the lives of the Wingfields are dramatized, Williams constantly makes us aware of a larger world of objective reality by his allusions to contemporary events and names. (What is the meaning of each of these: Guernica, "Franco Triumphs," Berchtesgaden, Chamberlain's umbrella, Ole Dizzy Dean, Century of Progress?) Hence the restlessness, frustrations, and despair in the lives of Williams' characters seem all the more poignant pictured against the backdrop of a sick and insecure world poised on the brink of a catastrophic war. But like *Come Back, Little Sheba,* Williams' play is concerned with little people whose problems to them are anything but inconsequential and who "lead lives of quiet desperation." Both Inge and Williams are economical in plot development; Inge is determined to let the facts speak out objectively, although the "facts," as we have noticed, are carefully selected and controlled and artistically organized. Unlike Williams, however, he does not make any extensive use of expressionism. Williams is far more an experimenter, a dramatic pioneer in revolt against what he calls "the exhausted theatre of realistic conventions" of such plays as *The Wild Duck.* Although both Ibsen and Williams, like Shaw, Synge, and Inge as well, are concerned with the general conflict between illusion and reality, Ibsen dramatized a theme, whereas Williams creates mood and character in a novel and exciting manner.

Novelty or originality are meaningless in the theater unless they are made a part of the complete organic unity of a drama. A technique which simply calls attention to itself as a violation of usual dramatic conventions will work against any unified effect; it must instead serve a specific purpose better perhaps than any traditional dramatic resources that the playwright could call upon. Williams' use of the magic-lantern slides projected on a screen is a good case in point. Eddie Dowling omitted this device in his Broadway production, and Tennessee Williams made no objection because Laurette Taylor's magnificent performance made simplicity desirable. Clearly, then, the device is not integral to the structural unity of the play. The question is thus raised whether it is only a nonessential theater trick. In his production notes Williams gives

his reasons for including the slides; but one critic, commenting on the published stage directions, called the technique "redundant and rather precious; the young playwright was straining for effect without realizing that his simple tale, so hauntingly self-sufficient, needs no adornment."[1] Whose point of view seems the more convincing?

But if the function of the screen is controversial, many of Williams' other theatrical devices are of the first importance in establishing character and tone. The set itself, for example, is functional: its great depth — the living room, the dining room, the fire escape, and the alleys on either side of the tenement appear — permits different actions to take place simultaneously. By using transparencies, the dramatist can have visible either the exterior of the Wingfield apartment (as at the rise of the curtain) or the interior. The first scene, which takes place in a soft light behind the transparent portieres, stresses the words of Tom, the narrator: "Being a memory play, it is dimly lighted, it is sentimental, it is not realistic" (p. 466).

Because the living room is downstage, the important glass menagerie and the father's picture are visible throughout the play. The symbolism of the menagerie, Laura's primary means of escape from a realistic world she cannot understand, is quite obvious. The victrola is revealed as a second way of escape for her. For example, when Amanda takes Laura to task for deceiving her about her attendance at the business college, Laura instinctively goes to wind the victrola, trying to escape her mother's cruel words, to drown them out with music. Later, when the Gentleman Caller and Tom are waiting to be admitted to the apartment, Laura cannot muster the courage to open the door until she "darts to the victrola and winds it frantically and turns it on . . . . A faraway, scratchy rendition of 'Dardanella' softens the air and gives her strength to move through it" (p. 507). On what other occasions does she return to this source of comfort? During her conversation with Jim in which she loses some of her shy self-consciousness, she even shows him her glass menagerie and allows him to hold her choicest possession, the lonely and unique unicorn, a symbol of herself. When she gives him the broken unicorn, Jim is, of course, unaware that the souvenir which he has unintentionally made "less freakish" and "more at home" is the Laura that might have been. Why is it appropriate that Jim should be given the unicorn?

[1] John Gassner, "Tennessee Williams: Dramatist of Frustration," *College English*, X (October 1948), 5.

What other points of resemblance are there between Laura and the creatures of her menagerie? How does Williams succeed here in transforming symbol into a theatrically exciting scene?

In contrast, the typewriter, another important prop in the living room, is for Laura an instrument of torture, reminding her of her torturing experience at the business college. In Scene Two, when she hears Amanda approaching, Laura leaves her glass collection and "seats herself stiffly before the diagram of the typewriter keyboard" (p. 471). For Tom, however, who is frustrated both at home and at work, the typewriter is an instrument of creative expression: in Scene Three it is surrounded by "a wild disarray of manuscripts." The quarrel between Amanda and Tom that takes place in this scene "was probably precipitated by Amanda's interruption of his creative labor" (p. 479).

Wingfield's picture makes him a silent but forceful character. Both Amanda and Tom speak of him often and glance at his photograph, exaggerated in size because of its emotional value. For Amanda, this picture brings forth memories of her days in Blue Mountain when (according to her stories) she could have had her choice of numerous suitors, all potentially successful men. She cannot forget her youth, when she was gay, pretty, and sought after. Talking nostalgically about the "good old days" in Blue Mountain is for her a form of escape from her present miserable circumstances. Like Laura, she too has her glass menagerie, but her collection is one of memories that grow brighter with the passing years. In an effort to forget her ruinous mistake in marrying Wingfield, she talks constantly of her numerous "gentlemen callers." The picture of his smiling father, which even lights up on occasion, reminds Tom that one man has escaped and gone to faraway places in search of the adventure that he himself can only have vicariously, through the movies. He realizes that his father wronged his family, yet he knows all too well the strong desires that led him to abandon them: "I'm like my father. The bastard son of a bastard! See how he grins? And he's been absent going on sixteen years!" (p. 511). Tom's glass menagerie is the movie house; as he says while looking at the flashing marquees on Grand Avenue: "People go to the *movies* instead of *moving!* Hollywood characters are supposed to have all the adventures for everybody in America, while everybody in America sits in a dark room and watches them have them!" (p. 510). Later he makes his escape a reality by leaving to become a seaman, yet in his own words, "Oh, Laura, Laura, I tried to leave you behind me, but I am more faithful than I intended to be!"

(p. 540). Unlike his father, Tom is not the mere "selfish dreamer" his mother accuses him of being. He discovers that he cannot forget Laura and the past by "attempting to find in motion what was lost in space —" (p. 540).

In addition to the symbols of the menagerie, typewriter, unicorn, and picture there is one other important symbol — Jim. Not just a guest coming to dinner, he is a "Gentleman Caller" and all that this means in the play. For Amanda and Laura "he is the long delayed but always expected something that we live for" (p. 467). Amanda firmly believes that he will solve all her problems of what to do about Laura, and for a few moments even Laura thinks that he will become a part of her life. In the words of the narrator, "He is . . . an emissary from a world of reality that we were somehow set apart from" (pp. 466-467). Yet all the preparations and expense come to naught, and Jim returns to his world of reality and Betty, affected by his experience with Laura, yet not comprehending how he has increased the pathos of her situation.

The use of a narrator is fairly unusual in the modern theater. In this play, however, Tom is the logical character to assume the function. He is the only one who could have the proper perspective of the past, as he is both critical and sympathetic. By using Tom as narrator, Williams has been able to give validity to the memory devices; for although this is a play about Laura, it is all Tom's memory.

Aside from the skillful use of the spotlight and the dim stage to create the atmosphere of memory, lighting adds great intensity to such scenes as the emotionally charged one in which Amanda and Tom quarrel violently. In contrast to the "clear pool of light" that falls on Laura, desperate and panic-stricken, "the upstage area is lit with a turgid smoky red glow," reflecting the fiery rage of mother and son, as it casts their angry gestures on the ceiling (pp. 478-479). On another occasion the marquee lights shining during Tom's rebellious, significant speech to Jim add dramatic intensity to his words. Why? Just before the dinner in Scene Six, the summer storm that comes so abruptly intensifies the mood on stage. Laura is sick and faint at the thought of the meal with Jim. "The white curtains billow inward at the windows and there is a sorrowful murmur and deep blue dusk" (p. 513). A clap of thunder emphasizes the cries of Tom and Amanda — "Laura" — when they see that she is ill. The symbolism of the storm within Laura is obvious. During the dinner the central figure, that of Laura huddled on the sofa, is bathed in "a soft, becoming light"

(p. 515) that reveals a prettiness not usually apparent. Then the lights go out, and the dinner is finished in candlelight, just as Amanda might really wish it to be. Is the history of the "lovely old candelabrum" just another piece of Amanda's social chatter? Such a light is, of course, most suitable for the scene between Jim and Laura, for it is romantic, soft, and flattering. During this scene, too, the storm has ended, and "the air outside becomes pale and luminous as the moon breaks out" (p. 515). Candlelight is stressed again in a metaphor describing the joyous radiance in Laura's face. After Jim's revelation about his fiancee, "The holy candles in the altar of Laura's face have been snuffed out. There is a look of almost infinite desolation" (p. 535) . The final significant words of the play carry out the candle-motif, for Tom, bathed "in the chill white moonlight," says, "— for nowadays the world is lit by lightning! Blow out your candles, Laura — and so goodbye . . ." (p. 540). She blows out the candles, and the scene, like a memory, "dissolves."

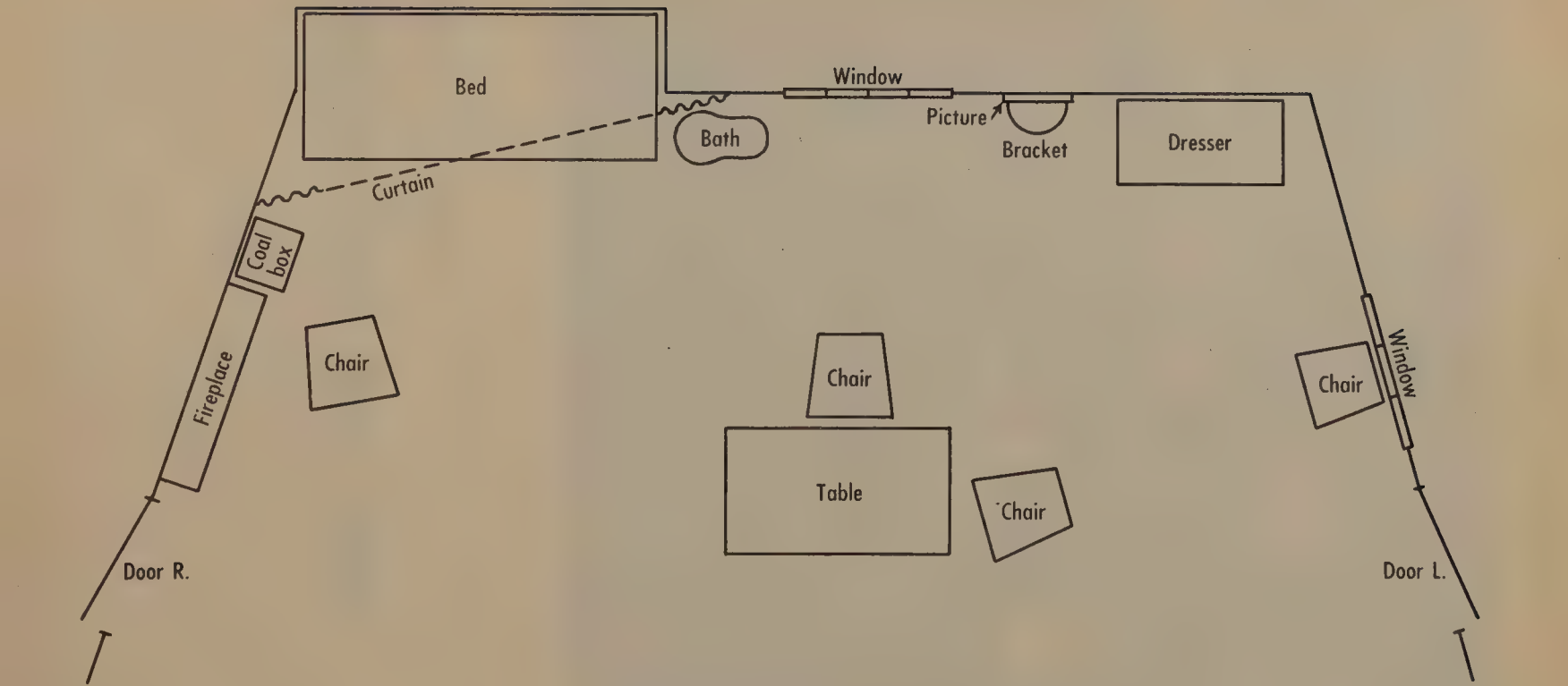
QUESTIONS

1. Both *The Wild Duck* and *The Glass Menagerie* are concerned with the same problem — illusion in conflict with reality. What is each dramatist's purpose in dealing with this general theme? What innovations in dramatic technique does Williams introduce? On the other hand, do you note any similarity in the significance of the symbols?
2. The playwright has created a fairly elaborate set which is integrally related to his total effect. What is the function of the lighted movie marquees across the alley? The dining room? The Paradise Dance Hall?
3. Early in the play the audience, like Amanda, scarcely believes that Tom can possibly go to the movies as much as he says he does. What proof is there that he is telling the truth?
4. What ironic significance does Tom's recital of grace have at the end of Scene Six?
5. How is Jim's analysis of Laura on page 526 a revelation of his own character?
6. What is the significance of Amanda's calling Laura "crippled" on page 539?
7. Discuss the importance of costumes in establishing character in *The Glass Menagerie.*
8. Williams has given his reader a thumbnail sketch of his four characters. Develop each into a full-length portrait, citing evidence to substantiate each trait of character.

9. In *Come Back, Little Sheba* and *The Glass Menagerie,* considerable emphasis is placed on a young man's coming to dinner. Compare and contrast the handling of the event on stage and its function in each play.
10. Analyze the extraordinary complexity of tone in *The Glass Menagerie,* showing how the various moods are created.
11. What is the audience's final attitude toward each of the characters?
12. Read the reviews of *The Glass Menagerie* in the *New York Theatre Critics' Reviews, 1945,* Vol. VI, pages 234-237. Which of the criticisms do you find most intelligent and perceptive? At what points would you take issue with these professional New York critics?

SEAN O'CASEY

JUNO AND THE PAYCOCK



JUNO AND THE PAYCOCK

SEAN O'CASEY

SEAN O'CASEY's childhood was one that would hardly seem conducive to the development of one of the great Irish playwrights of our century. Born in the Dublin slums in 1884, he lived in poverty-stricken squalor with his widowed mother, receiving only the most meager formal education. In his autobiography he bitterly castigates the clergy's handling of his schooling, recalling how he was "lugged off along at the backside of this soft-hatted, stiff-collared, egg-headed oul' henchman of heaven, to be added to the swarm of urchins cowering and groping about in the rag-and-bone education provided by the church and state for the children of those who hadn't the wherewithal to do any better." High-strung, hot-tempered, and suffering from an eye disease, he taught himself to read and write after leaving school. Often he would go without food to buy books; his love for old Irish literature and Shakespeare are reflected in the rich eloquence of his own dramatic prose.

At fourteen he toiled ten hours a day in an ironmongery for four shillings a week. His temperamental nature cost him job after job; once he was fined for refusing to tip his hat while receiving his wretched salary. Stevedore, road builder, hod carrier, he was a fighter in the Dublin transportation strike in 1913. He joined the movement for Irish independence and was an organizer of the Irish Citizen Army. Later, however, he denounced Irish nationalism as offering only narrow, blind, and prejudiced solutions for the real problem of poverty and insecurity for the underprivileged working class. The Marxian concept of class struggle was not theory but everyday reality for O'Casey, and in recent years he has lived a proud and lonely exile in England, a believer in the communist cause.

A nonconformist in drama as well as in politics, Ireland's greatest living writer has never been, in a popular sense, successful. He was first known as a writer on labor and political questions, and it was not until he was almost forty that he emerged as a dramatist. After three of his plays had been rejected, the Abbey Theatre accepted and produced *The Shadow of a Gunman. Juno*

and the Paycock, his most famous play, was put on by the Abbey players in 1924. A worthy successor to the mantle of John Synge had at last arrived in Ireland. What Synge with his magnificent gift of language has done for the Irish peasant, O'Casey has accomplished with an equal measure of poetic and dramatic genius and intensity of feeling for the proletarian urban Irish.

PRINCIPAL WORKS

Plays

The Shadow of a Gunman (1923)
Cathleen Listens In (1923)
Juno and the Paycock (1924)
Nannie's Night Out (1924)
The Plough and the Stars (1926)
The Silver Tassie (1928)
Within the Gates (1934)
Windfalls (stories, poems, and plays) (1934)
The Star Turns Red (1940)
Purple Dust (1941)
Red Roses for Me (1943)
Oak Leaves and Lavender (1947)
Cock-a-doodle Dandy (1949)
The Bishop's Bonfire (1955)

Autobiography

I Knock at the Door (1939)
Pictures in the Hallway (1942)
Drums Under the Windows (1946)
Inishfallen, Fare Thee Well (1949)
Rose and Crown (1952)
Sunset and Evening Star (1954)

Criticism

The Flying Wasp (1937)

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A NOTE ON *JUNO AND THE PAYCOCK*

The Irish political allusions may prove troublesome without a brief sketch of Ireland's struggle with Britain for home rule. In the late nineteenth century an Irish nationalist organization called Sinn Fein (the Fenians) urged legislative and administrative control of Ireland by the Irish and advocated a revival of the Irish language. When Charles Stewart Parnell, one of the leaders in the movement, became involved as co-respondent in a divorce suit in which adultery was proved, the Catholic Church in Ireland demanded his retirement from politics. The Church and the Irish rebels split with intense acrimony over this issue. Boyle's arguments on pages 569 and 578-579 reflect the persistent bitterness it aroused.

During Easter Week, 1916, street fighting broke out in Dublin between the Irish nationalists and the British, whose police were called "Tans" or "Black and Tans" because of the color of their uniforms; it was in this fighting that Johnny Boyle received the first of the injuries that crippled him. The underlying tensions constantly erupted in guerrilla warfare from 1919 to 1922. In January 1922, the Irish Free State came into being as a British dominion, with Northern Ireland remaining under British control. The extreme Irish nationalists — referred to in the play as the Irregulars, the die-hards, Republicans, or C.I.D. men — wanted no part of a treaty which did not make Ireland a free republic and continued their guerrilla tactics, this time against the Civic Guards or Free Staters, Irish police loyal to the new Irish government of the Free State. The closing days of this struggle are reflected in the action of *Juno*.

CHARACTERS

"CAPTAIN" JACK BOYLE
JUNO BOYLE, *his wife*
JOHNNY BOYLE } *their children*
MARY BOYLE }
"JOXER" DALY
MRS. MAISIE MADIGAN
"NEEDLE" NUGENT, *a tailor*
} *Residents in the Tenement*

MRS. TANCRED
JERRY DEVINE
CHARLIE BENTHAM, *a school teacher*
AN IRREGULAR MOBILIZER
TWO IRREGULARS
A COAL-BLOCK VENDOR
A SEWING MACHINE MAN
TWO FURNITURE REMOVAL MEN
TWO NEIGHBOURS

Period of the play, 1922.

Juno and the Paycock was first produced by the Abbey Theater, Dublin, in May, 1924.

Act One

The living room of a two-room tenancy occupied by the BOYLE *family in a tenement house in Dublin. Left, a door leading to another part of the house; left of door a window looking into the street; at back a dresser; farther to right at back, a window looking into the back of the house. Between the window and the dresser is a picture of the Virgin; below the picture, on a bracket, is a crimson bowl in which a floating votive light is burning. Farther to the right is a small bed partly concealed by cretonne hangings strung on a twine. To the right is the fireplace; near the fireplace is a door leading to the other room. Beside the fireplace is a box containing coal. On the mantelshelf is an alarm clock lying on its face. In a corner near the window looking into the back is a galvanized bath. A table and some chairs. On the table are breakfast things for one. A teapot is on the hob and a frying-pan stands inside the fender. There are a few books on the dresser and one on the table. Leaning against the dresser is a long-handled shovel—the kind invariably used by labourers when turning concrete or mixing mortar.* JOHNNY BOYLE *is sitting crouched beside the fire.* MARY *with her jumper off—it is lying on the back of a chair—is arranging her hair before a tiny mirror perched on the table. Beside the mirror is stretched out the morning paper, which she looks at when she isn't gazing into the mirror. She is a well-made and good-looking girl of twenty-two. Two forces are working in her mind—one, through the circumstances of her life, pulling her back; the other, through the influence of books she has read, pushing her forward. The opposing forces are apparent in her speech and her manners, both of which are degraded by her environment, and improved by her acquaintance—slight though it be—with literature. The time is early forenoon.*

MARY (*looking at the paper*): On a little bye-road, out beyant Finglas, he was found.

(MRS. BOYLE *enters by door on right; she has been shopping and carries a small parcel in her hand. She is forty-five years of age, and twenty years ago she must have been a pretty woman; but her face*

has now assumed that look which ultimately settles down upon the faces of the women of the working-class; a look of listless monotony and harassed anxiety, blending with an expression of mechanical resistance. Were circumstances favourable, she would probably be a handsome, active and clever woman.)

MRS. BOYLE: Isn't he come in yet?

MARY: No, mother.

MRS. BOYLE: Oh, he'll come in when he likes; struttin' about the town like a paycock with Joxer, I suppose. I hear all about Mrs. Tancred's son is in this mornin's paper.

MARY: The full details are in it this mornin'; seven wounds he had —one entherin' the neck, with an exit wound beneath the left shoulder-blade; another in the left breast penethratin' the heart, an' . . .

JOHNNY (*springing up from the fire*): Oh, quit that readin', for God's sake! Are yous losin' all your feelin's? It'll soon be that none of yous'll read anythin' that's not about butcherin'! (*He goes quickly into the room on left.*)

MARY: He's gettin' very sensitive, all of a sudden!

MRS. BOYLE: I'll read it myself, Mary, by an' by, when I come home. Everybody's sayin' that he was a die-hard—thanks be to God that Johnny had nothin' to do with him this long time. . . . (*Opening the parcel and taking out some sausages, which she places on a plate*) Ah, then, if that father o' yours doesn't come in soon for his breakfast, he may go without any; I'll not wait much longer for him.

MARY: Can't you let him get it himself when he comes in?

MRS. BOYLE: Yes, an' let him bring in Joxer Daly along with him? Ay, that's what he'd like, an' that's what he's waitin' for—till he thinks I'm gone to work, an' then sail in with the boul' Joxer, to burn all the coal an' dhrink all the tea in the place, to show them what a good Samaritan he is! But I'll stop here till he comes in, if I have to wait till tomorrow mornin'.

VOICE OF JOHNNY INSIDE: Mother!

MRS. BOYLE: Yis?

VOICE OF JOHNNY: Bring us in a dhrink o' wather.

MRS. BOYLE: Bring in that fella a dhrink o' wather, for God's sake, Mary.

MARY: Isn't he big an' able enough to come out an' get it himself?

MRS. BOYLE: If you weren't well yourself you'd like somebody to bring you in a dhrink o' wather. (*She brings in drink and returns.*)

MRS. BOYLE: Isn't it terrible to have to be waitin' this way! You'd think he was bringin' twenty poun's a week into the house the way he's goin' on. He wore out the Health Insurance long ago, he's afther wearin' out the unemployment dole, an', now, he's thryin' to wear out me! An' constantly singin', no less, when he ought always to be on his knees offerin' up a Novena for a job!

MARY (*tying a ribbon fillet-wise around her head*): I don't like this ribbon, ma; I think I'll wear the green—it looks betther than the blue.

MRS. BOYLE: Ah, wear whatever ribbon you like, girl, only don't be botherin' me. I don't know what a girl on strike wants to be wearin' a ribbon round her head for or silk stockin's on her legs either; it's wearin' them things that make the employers think they're givin' yous too much money.

MARY: The hour is past now when we'll ask the employers' permission to wear what we like.

MRS. BOYLE: I don't know why you wanted to walk out for Jennie Claffey; up to this you never had a good word for her.

MARY: What's the use of belongin' to a Trades Union if you won't stand up for your principles? Why did they sack her? It was a clear case of victimization. We couldn't let her walk the streets, could we?

MRS. BOYLE: No, of course yous couldn't—yous wanted to keep her company. Wan victim wasn't enough. When the employers sacrifice wan victim, the Trades Unions go wan betther be sacrificin' a hundred.

MARY: It doesn't matther what you say, ma—a principle's a principle.

MRS. BOYLE: Yis; an' when I go into oul' Murphy's tomorrow, an' he gets to know that, instead o' payin' all, I'm goin' to borry more, what'll he say when I tell him a principle's a principle? What'll we do if he refuses to give us any more on tick?

MARY: He daren't refuse—if he does, can't you tell him he's paid?

MRS. BOYLE: It's lookin' as if he was paid, whether he refuses or no.

(JOHNNY *appears at the door on left. He can be plainly seen now; he is a thin delicate fellow, something younger than* MARY. *He has evidently gone through a rough time. His face is pale and drawn; there is a tremulous look of indefinite fear in his eyes. The left sleeve of his coat is empty, and he walks with a slight halt.*)

JOHNNY: I was lyin' down; I thought yous were gone. Oul' Simon Mackay is thrampin' about like a horse over me head, an' I can't sleep with him—they're like thunder-claps in me brain! The curse o'—God forgive me for goin' to curse!

MRS. BOYLE: There, now; go back an' lie down agan, an' I'll bring you in a nice cup o' tay.

JOHNNY: Tay, tay, tay! You're always thinkin' o' tay. If a man was dyin', you'd thry to make him swally a cup o' tay! (*He goes back.*)

MRS. BOYLE: I don't know what's goin' to be done with him. The bullet he got in the hip in Easter Week was bad enough, but the bomb that shatthered his arm in the fight in O'Connell Street put the finishin' touch on him. I knew he was makin' a fool of himself. God knows I went down on me bended knees to him not to go agen the Free State.

MARY: He stuck to his principles, an', no matther how you may argue, ma, a principle's a principle.

VOICE OF JOHNNY: Is Mary goin' to stay here?

MARY: No, I'm not goin' to stay here; you can't expect me to be always at your beck an' call, can you?

VOICE OF JOHNNY: I won't stop here be meself!

MRS. BOYLE: Amn't I nicely handicapped with the whole o' yous! I don't know what any o' yous ud do without your ma. (*To* JOHNNY) Your father'll be here in a minute, an' if you want anythin', he'll get it for you.

JOHNNY: I hate assin' him for anythin'. . . . He hates to be assed to stir. . . . Is the light lightin' before the picture o' the Virgin?

MRS. BOYLE: Yis, yis! The wan inside to St. Anthony isn't enough, but he must have another wan to the Virgin here!

(JERRY DEVINE *enters hastily. He is about twenty-five, well set, active and earnest. He is a type, becoming very common now in the Labour Movement, of a mind knowing enough to make the mass of his associates, who know less, a power, and too little to broaden that power for the benefit of all.* MARY *seizes her jumper and runs hastily into room left.*)

JERRY (*breathless*): Where's the Captain, Mrs. Boyle; where's the Captain?

MRS. BOYLE: You may well ass a body that: he's wherever Joxer Daly is—dhrinkin' in some snug or another.

JERRY: Father Farrell is just afther stoppin' to tell me to run up an' get him to go to the new job that's goin' on in Rathmines; his cousin is foreman o' the job, an' Father Farrell was speakin' to him about poor Johnny an' his father bein' idle so long, an' the foreman told Father Farrell to send the Captain up an' he'd give him a start—I wondher where I'd find him?

MRS. BOYLE: You'll find he's ayther in Ryan's or Foley's.

JERRY: I'll run round to Ryan's—I know it's a great house o' Joxer's. (*He rushes out.*)

MRS. BOYLE (*piteously*): There now, he'll miss that job, or I know for what! If he gets win' o' the word, he'll not come back till evenin', so that it'll be too late. There'll never be any good got out o' him so long as he goes with that shouldher-shruggin' Joxer. I killin' meself workin', an' he sthruttin' about from mornin' till night like a paycock!

(*The steps of two persons are heard coming up a flight of stairs. They are the footsteps of* CAPTAIN BOYLE and JOXER. CAPTAIN BOYLE *is singing in a deep, sonorous, self-honouring voice.*)

THE CAPTAIN: Sweet Spirit, hear me prayer! Hear . . . oh . . . hear . . . me prayer . . . hear, oh, hear . . . Oh, he . . . ar . . . oh, he . . . ar . . . me . . . pray . . . er!

JOXER (*outside*): Ah, that's a darlin' song, a daaarlin' song!

MRS BOYLE (*viciously*): Sweet spirit hear his prayer! Oh, then, I'll take me solemn affeydavey, it's not for a job he's prayin'!

(*She sits down on the bed so that the cretonne hangings hide her from the view of those entering.*)

(THE CAPTAIN *comes slowly in. He is a man of about sixty; stout, grey-haired and stocky. His neck is short, and his head looks like a stone ball that one sometimes sees on top of a gate-post. His cheeks, reddish-purple, are puffed out, as if he were always repressing an almost irrepressible ejaculation. On his upper lip is a crisp, tightly cropped moustache; he carries himself with the upper part of his body slightly thrown back, and his stomach slightly thrust forward. His walk is a slow, consequential strut. His clothes are dingy, and he wears a faded seaman's cap with a glazed peak.*)

BOYLE (*to* JOXER, *who is still outside*): Come on, come on in, Joxer; she's gone out long ago, man. If there's nothing else to be got, we'll furrage out a cup o' tay, anyway. It's the only bit I get in comfort when she's away. 'Tisn't Juno should be her pet name at all, but Deirdre of the Sorras, for she's always grousin'.

(JOXER *steps cautiously into the room. He may be younger than* THE CAPTAIN *but he looks a lot older. His face is like a bundle of crinkled paper; his eyes have a cunning twinkle; he is spare and loosely built; he has a habit of constantly shrugging his shoulders with a peculiar twitching movement, meant to be ingratiating. His face is invariably ornamented with a grin.*)

JOXER: It's a terrible thing to be tied to a woman that's always grousin'. I don't know how you stick it—it ud put years on me. It's a good job she has to be so often away, for (*with a shrug*) when the cat's away, the mice can play!

BOYLE (*with a commanding and complacent gesture*): Pull over to the fire, Joxer, an' we'll have a cup o' tay in a minute.

JOXER: Ah, a cup o' tay's a darlin' thing, a daaarlin' thing—the cup that cheers but doesn't . . .

(JOXER'S *rhapsody is cut short by the sight of* JUNO *coming forward and confronting the two cronies. Both are stupefied.*)

MRS. BOYLE (*with sweet irony—poking the fire, and turning her head to glare at* JOXER): Pull over to the fire, Joxer Daly, an' we'll have a cup o' tay in a minute! Are you sure, now, you wouldn't like an egg?

JOXER: I can't stop, Mrs. Boyle; I'm in a desperate hurry, a desperate hurry.

MRS. BOYLE: Pull over to the fire, Joxer Daly; people is always far more comfortabler here than they are in their own place.

(JOXER *makes hastily for the door.* BOYLE *stirs to follow him; thinks of something to relieve the situation—stops, and says suddenly*):

Joxer!

JOXER (*at door ready to bolt*): Yis?

BOYLE: You know the foreman o' that job that's goin' on down in Killesther, don't you, Joxer?

JOXER (*puzzled*): Foreman—Killesther?

BOYLE (*with a meaning look*): He's a butty o' yours, isn't he?

JOXER (*the truth dawning on him*): The foreman at Killesther—oh, yis, yis. He's an oul' butty o' mine—oh, he's a darlin' man, a daarlin' man.

BOYLE: Oh, then, it's a sure thing. It's a pity we didn't go down at breakfast first thing this mornin'—we might ha' been working now; but you didn't know it then.

JOXER (*with a shrug*): It's betther late than never.

BOYLE: It's nearly time we got a start, anyhow; I'm fed up knockin' round, doin' nothin'. He promised you—gave you the straight tip?

JOXER: Yis. "Come down on the blow o' dinner," says he, "an' I'll start you, an' any friend you like to brin' with you." Ah, says I, you're a darlin' man, a daaarlin' man.

BOYLE: Well, it couldn't come at a betther time—we're a long time waitin' for it.

JOXER: Indeed we were; but it's a long lane that has no turnin'.

BOYLE: The blow up for dinner is at one—wait till I see what time it 'tis. (*He goes over to the mantelpiece, and gingerly lifts the clock.*)

MRS. BOYLE: Min' now, how you go on fiddlin' with that clock—you know the least little thing sets it asthray.

BOYLE: The job couldn't come at a betther time; I'm feelin' in great fettle, Joxer. I'd hardly believe I ever had a pain in me legs, an' last week I was nearly crippled with them.

JOXER: That's betther and betther; ah, God never shut wan door but he opened another!

BOYLE: It's only eleven o'clock; we've lashins o' time. I'll slip on me oul' moleskins afther breakfast, an' we can saunther down at our ayse. (*Putting his hand on the shovel*) I think, Joxer, we'd betther bring our shovels?

JOXER: Yis, Captain, yis; it's betther to go fully prepared an' ready for all eventualities. You bring your long-tailed shovel, an' I'll bring me navvy. We mighten' want them, an', then agen, we might: for want of a nail the shoe was lost, for want of a shoe the horse was lost, an' for want of a horse the man was lost—aw, that's a darlin' proverb, a daarlin' . . .

(*As* JOXER *is finishing his sentence,* MRS. BOYLE *approaches the door and* JOXER *retreats hurriedly. She shuts the door with a bang.*)

BOYLE (*suggestively*): We won't be long pullin' ourselves together agen when I'm working for a few weeks.

(MRS. BOYLE *takes no notice.*)

BOYLE: The foreman on the job is an oul' butty o' Joxer's; I have an idea that I know him meself. (*Silence*) . . . There's a button off the back o' me moleskin trousers. . . . If you leave out a needle an' thread I'll sew it on meself. . . . Thanks be to God, the pains in me legs is gone, anyhow!

MRS. BOYLE (*with a burst*): Look here, Mr. Jacky Boyle, them yarns won't go down with Juno. I know you an' Joxer Daly of an oul' date, an', if you think you're able to come it over me with them fairy tales, you're in the wrong shop.

BOYLE (*coughing subduedly to relieve the tenseness of the situation*): U-u-u-ugh.

MRS. BOYLE: Butty o' Joxer's! Oh, you'll do a lot o' good as long as you continue to be a butty o' Joxer's!

BOYLE: U-u-u-ugh.

MRS. BOYLE: Shovel! Ah, then, me boyo, you'd do far more work with a knife an' fork than ever you'll do with a shovel! If there was e'er a genuine job goin' you'd be dh'other way about—not able to lift your arms with the pains in your legs! Your poor wife slavin' to

keep the bit in your mouth, an' you gallivantin' about all the day like a paycock!

BOYLE: It ud be betther for a man to be dead, betther for a man to be dead.

MRS. BOYLE (*ignoring the interruption*): Everybody callin' you "Captain," an' you only wanst on the wather, in an oul' collier from here to Liverpool, when anybody, to listen or look at you, ud take you for a second Christo For Columbus!

BOYLE: Are you never goin' to give us a rest?

MRS. BOYLE: Oh, you're never tired o' lookin' for a rest.

BOYLE: D'ye want to dhrive me out o' the house?

MRS. BOYLE: It ud be easier to dhrive you out o' the house than to dhrive you into a job. Here, sit down an' take your breakfast—it may be the last you'll get, for I don't know where the next is goin' to come from.

BOYLE: If I get this job we'll be all right.

MRS. BOYLE: Did ye see Jerry Devine?

BOYLE (*testily*): No, I didn't see him.

MRS. BOYLE: No, but you seen Joxer. Well, he was here lookin' for you.

BOYLE: Well, let him look!

MRS. BOYLE: Oh, indeed, he may well look, for it ud be hard for him to see you, an' you stuck in Ryan's snug.

BOYLE: I wasn't in Ryan's snug—I don't go into Ryan's.

MRS. BOYLE: Oh, is there a mad dog there? Well, if you weren't in Ryan's you were in Foley's.

BOYLE: I'm telling you for the last three weeks I haven't tasted a dhrop of intoxicatin' liquor. I wasn't in ayther wan snug or dh'other —I could swear that on a prayer-book—I'm as innocent as the child unborn!

MRS. BOYLE: Well, if you'd been in for your breakfast you'd ha' seen him.

BOYLE (*suspiciously*): What does he want me for?

MRS. BOYLE: He'll be back any minute an' then you'll soon know.

BOYLE: I'll dhrop out an' see if I can meet him.

MRS. BOYLE: You'll sit down an' take your breakfast, an' let me go to me work, for I'm an hour late already waitin' for you.

BOYLE: You needn't ha' waited, for I'll take no breakfast—I've a little spirit left in me still!

MRS. BOYLE: Are you goin' to have your breakfast—yes or no?

BOYLE (*too proud to yield*): I'll have no breakfast—yous can keep your breakfast. (*Plaintively*) I'll knock out a bit somewhere, never fear.

MRS. BOYLE: Nobody's goin' to coax you—don't think that. (*She vigorously replaces the pan and the sausages in the press.*)

BOYLE: I've a little spirit left in me still.

(JERRY DEVINE *enters hastily.*)

JERRY: Oh, here you are at last! I've been searchin' for you everywhere. The foreman in Foley's told me you hadn't left the snug with Joxer ten minutes before I went in.

MRS. BOYLE: An' he swearin' on the holy prayer-book that he wasn't in no snug!

BOYLE (*to* JERRY): What business is it o' yours whether I was in a snug or no? What do you want to be gallopin' about afther me for? Is a man not to be allowed to leave his house for a minute without havin' a pack o' spies, pimps an' informers cantherin' at his heels?

JERRY: Oh, you're takin' a wrong view of it, Mr. Boyle; I simply was anxious to do you a good turn. I have a message for you from Father Farrell: he says that if you go to the job that's on in Rathmines, an' ask for Foreman Mangan, you'll get a start.

BOYLE: That's all right, but I don't want the motions of me body to be watched the way an asthronomer ud watch a star. If you're folleyin' Mary aself, you've no pereeogative to be folleyin' me. (*Suddenly catching his thigh*) U-ugh, I'm afther gettin' a terrible twinge in me right leg!

MRS. BOYLE: Oh, it won't be very long now till it travels into your left wan. It's miraculous that whenever he scents a job in front of him, his legs begin to fail him! Then, me bucko, if you lose this chance, you may go an' furrage for yourself!

JERRY: This job'll last for some time, too, Captain, an' as soon as the foundations are in, it'll be cushy enough.

BOYLE: Won't it be a climbin' job? How d'ye expect me to be able to go up a ladder with these legs? An', if I get up aself, how am I goin' to get down agen?

MRS. BOYLE (*viciously*): Get wan o' the labourers to carry you down in a hod! You can't climb a laddher, but you can skip like a goat into a snug!

JERRY: I wouldn't let meself be let down that easy, Mr. Boyle; a little exercise, now, might do you all the good in the world.

BOYLE: It's a docthor you should have been, Devine—maybe you know more about the pains in me legs than meself that has them?

JERRY (*irritated*): Oh, I know nothin' about the pains in your legs; I've brought the message that Father Farrell gave me, an' that's all I can do.

MRS. BOYLE: Here, sit down an' take your breakfast, an' go an' get ready; an' don't be actin' as if you couldn't pull a wing out of a dead bee.

BOYLE: I want no breakfast, I tell you; it ud choke me afther all that's been said. I've a little spirit left in me still.

MRS. BOYLE: Well, let's see your spirit, then, an' go in at wanst an' put on your moleskin trousers!

BOYLE (*moving towards the door on left*): It ud be betther for a man to be dead! U-ugh! There's another twinge in me other leg! Nobody but meself knows the sufferin' I'm goin' through with the pains in these legs o' mine! (*He goes into the room on left as* MARY *comes out with her hat in her hand.*)

MRS. BOYLE: I'll have to push off now, for I'm terrible late already, but I was determined to stay an' hunt that Joxer this time. (*She goes off.*)

JERRY: Are you going out, Mary?

MARY: It looks like it when I'm putting on my hat, doesn't it?

JERRY: The bitther word agen, Mary.

MARY: You won't allow me to be friendly with you; if I thry, you deliberately misundherstand it.

JERRY: I didn't always misundherstand it; you were often delighted to have the arms of Jerry around you.

MARY: If you go on talkin' like this, Jerry Devine, you'll make me hate you!

JERRY: Well, let it be either a weddin' or a wake! Listen, Mary, I'm standin' for the Secretaryship of our Union. There's only one oppосin' me; I'm popular with all the men, an' a good speaker—all are sayin' that I'll get elected.

MARY: Well?

JERRY: The job's worth three hundred an' fifty pounds a year, Mary. You an' I could live nice an' cosily on that; it would lift you out o' this place an'. . .

MARY: I haven't time to listen to you now—I have to go. (*She is going out when* JERRY *bars the way.*)

JERRY (*appealingly*): Mary, what's come over you with me for the last few weeks? You hardly speak to me, an' then only a word with a face o' bittherness on it. Have you forgotten, Mary, all the happy evenin's that were as sweet as the scented hawthorn that sheltered the sides o' the road as we saunthered through the country?

MARY: That's all over now. When you get your new job, Jerry, you won't be long findin' a girl far betther than I am for your sweetheart.

JERRY: Never, never, Mary! No matther what happens you'll always be the same to me.

MARY: I must be off; please let me go, Jerry.

JERRY: I'll go a bit o' the way with you.

MARY: You needn't, thanks; I want to be by meself.

JERRY (*catching her arm*): You're goin' to meet another fella; you've clicked with some one else, me lady!

MARY: That's no concern o' yours, Jerry Devine; let me go!

JERRY: I saw yous comin' out o' the Cornflower Dance Class, an' you hangin' on his arm—a thin, lanky strip of a Micky Dazzler, with a walkin' stick an' gloves!

VOICE OF JOHNNY (*loudly*): What are you doin' there—pullin' about everything!

VOICE OF BOYLE (*loudly and viciously*): I'm puttin' on me moleskin trousers!

MARY: You're hurtin' me arm! Let me go, or I'll scream, an' then you'll have the oul' fella out on top of us!

JERRY: Don't be so hard on a fella, Mary, don't be so hard.

BOYLE (*appearing at the door*): What's the meanin' of all this hillabaloo?

MARY: Let me go, let me go!

BOYLE: D'ye hear me—what's all this hillabaloo about?

JERRY (*plaintively*): Will you not give us one kind word, one kind word, Mary?

BOYLE: D'ye hear me talkin' to yous? What's all this hillabaloo for?

JERRY: Let me kiss your hand, your little, tiny, white hand!

BOYLE: Your little, tiny, white hand—are you takin' leave o' your senses, man?

(MARY *breaks away and rushes out.*)

BOYLE: This is nice goin's on in front of her father!

JERRY: Ah, dhry up, for God's sake! (*He follows* MARY.)

BOYLE: Chiselurs don't care a damn now about their parents, they're bringin' their fathers' grey hairs down with sorra to the grave, an' laughin' at it, laughin' at it. Ah, I suppose it's just the same everywhere—the whole worl's in a state o' chassis! (*He sits by the fire*) Breakfast! Well, they can keep their breakfast for me. Not if they

went down on their bended knees would I take it—I'll show them I've a little spirit left in me still! (*He goes over to the press, takes out a plate and looks at it*) Sassige! Well, let her keep her sassige. (*He returns to the fire, takes up the teapot and gives it a gentle shake*) The tay's wet right enough. (*A pause; he rises, goes to the press, takes out the sausage, puts it on the pan, and puts both on the fire. He attends the sausage with a fork.*)

BOYLE (*singing*):

When the robins nest agen,
And the flowers are in bloom,
When the Springtime's sunny smile seems to banish all sorrow an' gloom;
Then me bonny blue-ey'd lad, if me heart be true till then—
He's promised he'll come back to me,
When the robins nest agen!

(*He lifts his head at the high note, and then drops his eyes to the pan.*)

BOYLE (*singing*):

When the . . .

(*Steps are heard approaching; he whips the pan off the fire and puts it under the bed, then sits down at the fire. The door opens and a bearded man looking in says*):

You don't happen to want a sewin' machine?

BOYLE (*furiously*): No, I don't want e'er a sewin' machine! (*He returns the pan to the fire, and commences to sing again.*)

BOYLE (*singing*):

When the robins nest agen,
And the flowers they are in bloom,
He's . . .

(*A thundering knock is heard at the street door.*)

BOYLE: There's a terrible tatheraraa—that's a stranger—that's nobody belongin' to the house. (*Another loud knock.*)

JOXER (*sticking his head in at the door*): Did ye hear them tatherarahs?

BOYLE: Well, Joxer, I'm not deaf.

JOHNNY (*appearing in his shirt and trousers at the door on left; his face is anxious and his voice is tremulous*): Who's that at the door; who's that at the door? Who gave that knock—d'ye yous hear me—are yous deaf or dhrunk or what?

BOYLE (*to* JOHNNY): How the hell do I know who 'tis? Joxer, stick your head out o' the window an' see.

JOXER: An' mebbe get a bullet in the kisser? Ah, none o' them thricks for Joxer! It's betther to be a coward than a corpse!

BOYLE (*looking cautiously out of the window*): It's a fella in a thrench coat.

JOHNNY: Holy Mary, Mother o' God, I . . .

BOYLE: He's goin' away—he must ha' got tired knockin'.

(JOHNNY *returns to the room on left.*)

BOYLE: Sit down an' have a cup o' tay, Joxer.

JOXER: I'm afraid the missus ud pop in on us agen before we'd know where we are. Somethin's tellin' me to go at wanst.

BOYLE: Don't be superstitious, man; we're Dublin men, an' not boyos that's only afther comin' up from the bog o' Allen—though if she did come in, right enough, we'd be caught like rats in a thrap.

JOXER: An' you know the sort she is—she wouldn't listen to reason—an' wanse bitten twice shy.

BOYLE (*going over to the window at back*): If the worst came to the worst, you could dart out here, Joxer; it's only a dhrop of a few feet to the roof of the return room, an' the first minute she goes into dh'other room, I'll give you the bend, an' you can slip in an' away.

JOXER (*yielding to the temptation*): Ah, I won't stop very long anyhow. (*Picking up a book from the table*) Whose is the buk?

BOYLE: Aw, one o' Mary's; she's always readin' lately—nothin' but thrash, too. There's one I was lookin' at dh'other day: three stories, The Doll's House, Ghosts, an' The Wild Duck—buks only fit for chiselurs!

JOXER: Didja ever rade *Elizabeth, or Th' Exile o' Sibayria* . . . ah, it's a darlin' story, a daarlin' story!

BOYLE: You eat your sassige, an' never min' *Th' Exile o' Sibayria.*

(*Both sit down;* BOYLE *fills out tea, pours gravy on* JOXER's *plate, and keeps the sausage for himself.*)

JOXER: What are you wearin' your moleskin trousers for?

BOYLE: I have to go to a job, Joxer. Just afther you'd gone, Devine kem runnin' in to tell us that Father Farrell said if I went down to the job that's goin' on in Rathmines I'd get a start.

JOXER: Be the holy, that's good news!

BOYLE: How is it good news? I wondher if you were in my condition, would you call it good news?

JOXER: I thought . . .

BOYLE: You thought! You think too sudden sometimes, Joxer. D'ye know, I'm hardly able to crawl with the pains in me legs!

JOXER: Yis, yis; I forgot the pains in your legs. I know you can do nothin' while they're at you.

BOYLE: You forgot; I don't think any of yous realize the state I'm in with the pains in me legs. What ud happen if I had to carry a bag o' cement?

JOXER: Ah, any man havin' the like of them pains id be down an' out, down an' out.

BOYLE: I wouldn't mind if he had said it to meself; but, no, oh no, he rushes in an' shouts it out in front o' Juno, an' you know what Juno is, Joxer. We all know Devine knows a little more than the rest of us, but he doesn't act as if he did; he's a good boy, sober, able to talk an' all that, but still . . .

JOXER: Oh, ay; able to argufy, but still . . .

BOYLE: If he's runnin' afther Mary, aself, he's not goin' to be runnin' afther me. Captain Boyle's able to take care of himself. Afther all, I'm not gettin' brought up on Virol. I never heard him usin' a curse; I don't believe he was ever dhrunk in his life—sure he's not like a Christian at all!

JOXER: You're afther takin' the word out o' me mouth—afther all, a Christian's natural, but he's unnatural.

BOYLE: His oul' fella was just the same—a Wicklow man.

JOXER: A Wicklow man! That explains the whole thing. I've met many a Wicklow man in me time, but I never met wan that was any good.

BOYLE: "Father Farrell," says he, "sent me down to tell you." Father Farrell! . . . D'ye know, Joxer, I never like to be beholden to any o' the clergy.

JOXER: It's dangerous, right enough.

BOYLE: If they do anything for you, they'd want you to be livin' in the Chapel. . . . I'm goin' to tell you somethin', Joxer, that I wouldn't tell to anybody else—the clergy always had too much power over the people in this unfortunate country.

JOXER: You could sing that if you had an air to it!

BOYLE (*becoming enthusiastic*): Didn't they prevent the people in '47 from seizin' the corn, an' they starvin'; didn't they down Parnell; didn't they say that hell wasn't hot enough nor eternity long enough to punish the Fenians? We don't forget, we don't forget them things, Joxer. If they've taken everything else from us, Joxer, they've left us our memory.

JOXER (*emotionally*): For mem'ry's the only friend that grief can call its own, that grief . . . can . . . call . . . its own!

BOYLE: Father Farrell's beginnin' to take a great intherest in Captain Boyle; because of what Johnny did for his country, says he to me wan day. It's a curious way to reward Johnny be makin' his poor oul' father work. But, that's what the clergy want, Joxer—work, work, work for me an' you; havin' us mulin' from mornin' till night, so that they may be in betther fettle when they come hoppin' round for their dues! Job! Well, let him give his job to wan of his hymn-singin', prayer-spoutin', craw-thumpin' Confraternity men!

(*The voice of a coal-block vendor is heard chanting in the street.*)

VOICE OF COAL VENDOR: Blocks . . . coal-blocks! Blocks . . . coal-blocks!

JOXER: God be with the young days when you were steppin' the deck of a manly ship, with the win' blowin' a hurricane through the masts, an' the only sound you'd hear was, "Port your helm!" an' the only answer, "Port it is, sir!"

BOYLE: Them was days, Joxer, them was days. Nothin' was too hot or too heavy for me then. Sailin' from the Gulf o' Mexico to the Antarctic Ocean. I seen things, I seen things, Joxer, that no mortal man should speak about that knows his Catechism. Ofen, an' ofen, when I was fixed to the wheel with a marlin-spike, an' the win's blowin' fierce an' the waves lashin' an' lashin', till you'd think every minute was goin' to be your last, an' it blowed, an' blowed—blew is the right word, Joxer, but blowed is what the sailors use. . . .

JOXER: Aw, it's a darlin' word, a daarlin' word.

BOYLE: An', as it blowed an' blowed, I ofen looked up at the sky an' assed meself the question—what is the stars, what is the stars?

VOICE OF COAL VENDOR: Any blocks, coal-blocks; blocks, coal-blocks!

JOXER: Ah, that's the question, that's the question—what is the stars?

BOYLE: An' then, I'd have another look, an' I'd ass meself—what is the moon?

JOXER: Ah, that's the question—what is the moon, what is the moon?

(*Rapid steps are heard coming towards the door.* BOYLE *makes desperate efforts to hide everything;* JOXER *rushes to the window in a frantic effort to get out;* BOYLE *begins to innocently lilt—"Oh, me darlin' Jennie, I will be thrue to thee," when the door is opened, and the black face of the* COAL VENDOR *appears.*)

THE COAL VENDOR: D'yes want any blocks?

BOYLE (*with a roar*): No, we don't want any blocks!

JOXER (*coming back with a sigh of relief*): That's afther puttin' the heart across me—I could ha' sworn it was Juno. I'd betther be goin', Captain; you couldn't tell the minute Juno'd hop in on us.

BOYLE: Let her hop in; we may as well have it out first as at last. I've made up me mind—I'm not goin' to do only what she damn well likes.

JOXER: Them sentiments does you credit, Captain; I don't like to say anything as between man an' wife, but I say as a butty, as a butty, Captain, that you've stuck it too long, an' that it's about time you showed a little spunk.

> How can a man die betther than facin' fearful odds,
> For th' ashes of his fathers an' the temples of his gods.

BOYLE: She has her rights—there's no one denyin' it, but haven't I me rights too?

JOXER: Of course you have—the sacred rights o' man!

BOYLE: Today, Joxer, there's goin' to be issued a proclamation be me, establishin' an independent Republic, an' Juno'll have to take an oath of allegiance.

JOXER: Be firm, be firm, Captain; the first few minutes'll be the worst:—if you gently touch a nettle it'll sting you for your pains; grasp it like a lad of mettle, an's as soft as silk remains!

VOICE OF JUNO OUTSIDE: Can't stop, Mrs. Madigan—I haven't a minute!

JOXER (*flying out of the window*): Holy God, here she is!

BOYLE (*packing the things away with a rush in the press*): I knew that fella ud stop till she was in on top of us! (*He sits down by the fire.*)

(JUNO *enters hastily; she is flurried and excited.*)

JUNO: Oh, you're in—you must have been only afther comin' in?

BOYLE: No, I never went out.

JUNO: It's curious, then, you never heard the knockin'. (*She puts her coat and hat on bed.*)

BOYLE: Knockin'? Of course I heard the knockin'.

JUNO: An' why didn't you open the door, then? I suppose you were so busy with Joxer that you hadn't time.

BOYLE: I haven't seen Joxer since I seen him before. Joxer! What ud bring Joxer here?

JUNO: D'ye mean to tell me that the pair of yous wasn't collogin' together here when me back was turned?

BOYLE: What ud we be collogin' together about? I have somethin' else to think of besides collogin' with Joxer. I can swear on all the holy prayer-books . . .

MRS. BOYLE: That you weren't in no snug! Go on in at wanst now, an' take aff that moleskin trousers o' yours, an' put on a collar an' tie to smarten yourself up a bit. There's a visitor comin' with Mary in a minute, an' he has great news for you.

BOYLE: A job, I suppose; let us get wan first before we start lookin' for another.

MRS. BOYLE: That's the thing that's able to put the win' up you. Well, it's no job, but news that'll give you the chance o' your life.

BOYLE: What's all the mysthery about?

MRS. BOYLE: G'win an' take off the moleskin trousers when you're told!

(BOYLE *goes into room on left.* MRS. BOYLE *tidies up the room, puts the shovel under the bed, and goes to the press.*)

MRS. BOYLE: Oh, God bless us, looka the way everythin's thrun about! Oh, Joxer was here, Joxer was here!

(MARY *enters with* CHARLIE BENTHAM; *he is a young man of twenty-five, tall, good-looking, with a very high opinion of himself generally. He is dressed in a brown coat, brown knee-breeches, grey stockings, a brown sweater, with a deep blue tie; he carries gloves and a walking-stick.*)

MRS. BOYLE (*fussing round*): Come in, Mr. Bentham; sit down, Mr. Bentham, in this chair; it's more comfortabler than that, Mr. Bentham. Himself'll be here in a minute; he's just takin' off his trousers.

MARY: Mother!

BENTHAM: Please don't put yourself to any trouble, Mrs. Boyle—I'm quite all right here, thank you.

MRS. BOYLE: An' to think of you knowin' Mary, an' she knowin' the news you had for us, an' wouldn't let on; but it's all the more welcomer now, for we were on our last lap!

VOICE OF JOHNNY INSIDE: What are you kickin' up all the racket for?

BOYLE (*roughly*): I'm takin' off me moleskin trousers!

JOHNNY: Can't you do it, then, without lettin' th' whole house know you're takin' off your trousers? What d'ye want puttin' them on an' takin' them off again?

BOYLE: Will you let me alone, will you let me alone? Am I never goin' to be done thryin' to please th' whole o' yous?

MRS. BOYLE (*to* BENTHAM): You must excuse th' state o' th' place, Mr. Bentham; th' minute I turn me back that man o' mine always makes a litther o' th' place, a litther o' th' place.

BENTHAM: Don't worry, Mrs. Boyle; it's all right, I assure . . .

BOYLE (*inside*): Where's me braces; where in th' name o' God did I leave me braces. . . . Ay, did you see where I put me braces?

JOHNNY (*inside, calling out*): Ma, will you come in here an' take da away ou' o' this or he'll dhrive me mad.

MRS. BOYLE (*going towards door*): Dear, dear, dear, that man'll be lookin' for somethin' on th' day o' Judgement. (*Looking into room and calling to* BOYLE) Look at your braces, man, hangin' round your neck!

BOYLE (*inside*): Aw, Holy God!

MRS. BOYLE (*calling*): Johnny, Johnny, come out here for a minute.

JOHNNY: Oh, leave Johnny alone, an' don't be annoyin' him!

MRS. BOYLE: Come on, Johnny, till I inthroduce you to Mr. Bentham. (*To* BENTHAM) Me son, Mr. Bentham; he's afther goin' through the mill. He was only a chiselur of a Boy Scout in Easter Week, when he got hit in the hip; and his arm was blew off in the fight in O'Connell Street. (JOHNNY *comes in*) Here he is, Mr. Bentham; Mr. Bentham, Johnny. None can deny he done his bit for Irelan', if that's going to do him any good.

JOHNNY (*boastfully*): I'd do it agen, ma, I'd do it agen; for a principle's a principle.

MRS. BOYLE: Ah, you lost your best principle, me boy, when you lost your arm; them's the only sort o' principles that's any good to a workin' man.

JOHNNY: Ireland only half free'll never be at peace while she has a son left to pull a trigger.

MRS. BOYLE: To be sure, to be sure—no bread's a lot betther than half a loaf. (*Calling loudly in to* BOYLE) Will you hurry up there?

(BOYLE *enters in his best trousers, which aren't too good, and looks very uncomfortable in his collar and tie.*)

MRS. BOYLE: This is me husband; Mr. Boyle, Mr. Bentham.

BENTHAM: Ah, very glad to know you, Mr. Boyle. How are you?

BOYLE: Ah, I'm not too well at all; I suffer terrible with pains in me legs. Juno can tell you there what . . .

MRS. BOYLE: You won't have many pains in your legs when you hear what Mr. Bentham has to tell you.

BENTHAM: Juno! What an interesting name! It reminds one of Homer's glorious story of ancient gods and heroes.

BOYLE: Yis, doesn't it? You see, Juno was born an' christened in June; I met her in June; we were married in June, an' Johnny was born in June, so wan day I says to her, "You should ha' been called Juno," an' the name stuck to her ever since.

MRS. BOYLE: Here we can talk o' them things agen; let Mr. Bentham say what he has to say now.

BENTHAM: Well, Mr. Boyle, I suppose you'll remember a Mr. Ellison of Santry—he's a relative of yours, I think.

BOYLE (*viciously*): Is it that prognosticator an' procrastinator! Of course I remember him.

BENTHAM: Well, he's dead, Mr. Boyle . . .

BOYLE: Sorra many'll go into mournin' for him.

MRS. BOYLE: Wait till you hear what Mr. Bentham has to say, an' then, maybe, you'll change your opinion.

BENTHAM: A week before he died he sent for me to write his will for him. He told me that there were two only that he wished to leave his property to: his second cousin Michael Finnegan of Santry, and John Boyle, his first cousin of Dublin.

BOYLE (*excitedly*): Me, is it me, me?

BENTHAM: You, Mr. Boyle; I'll read a copy of the will that I have here with me, which has been duly filed in the Court of Probate. (*He takes a paper from his pocket and reads*):

6th February, 1922.

This is the last Will and Testament of William Ellison, of Santry, in the County of Dublin. I hereby order and wish my property to be sold and divided as follows:—

£20 to the St. Vincent De Paul Society.

£60 for Masses for the repose of my soul (5s. for Each Mass).

The rest of my property to be divided between my first and second cousins.

I hereby appoint Timothy Buckly, of Santry, and Hugh Brierly, of Coolock, to be my Executors.

(*Signed*) WILLIAM ELLISON.
HUGH BRIERLY.
TIMOTHY BUCKLY.
CHARLES BENTHAM, N.T.

BOYLE (*eagerly*): An' how much'll be comin' out of it, Mr. Bentham?

BENTHAM: The Executors told me that half of the property would be anything between £1500 and £2000.

MARY: A fortune, father, a fortune!

JOHNNY: We'll be able to get out o' this place now, an' go somewhere we're not known.

MRS. BOYLE: You won't have to trouble about a job for a while, Jack.

BOYLE (*fervently*): I'll never doubt the goodness o' God agen.

BENTHAM: I congratulate you, Mr. Boyle. (*They shake hands.*)

BOYLE: An' now, Mr. Bentham, you'll have to have a wet.

BENTHAM: A wet?

BOYLE: A wet—a jar—a boul!

MRS. BOYLE: Jack, you're speakin' to Mr. Bentham, an' not to Joxer.

BOYLE (*solemnly*): Juno . . . Mary . . . Johnny . . . we'll have to go into mournin' at wanst. . . . I never expected that poor Bill ud die so sudden. . . . Well, we all have to die some day . . . you,

Juno, today . . . an' me, maybe, tomorrow. . . . It's sad, but it can't be helped. . . . Requiescat in pace . . . or, usin' our oul' tongue like St. Patrick or St. Briget, Guh sayeree jeea ayera!

MARY: Oh, father, that's not Rest in Peace; that's God save Ireland.

BOYLE: U-u-ugh, it's all the same—isn't it a prayer? . . . Juno, I'm done with Joxer; he's nothin' but a prognosticator an' a . . .

JOXER (*climbing angrily through the window and bounding into the room*): You're done with Joxer, are you? Maybe you thought I'd stop on the roof all the night for you! Joxer out on the roof with the win' blowin' through him was nothin' to you an' your friend with the collar an' tie!

MRS. BOYLE: What in the name o' God brought you out on the roof; what were you doin' there?

JOXER (*ironically*): I was dhreamin' I was standin' on the bridge of a ship, an' she sailin' the Antarctic Ocean, an' it blowed, an' blowed, an' I lookin' up at the sky an' sayin', what is the stars, what is the stars?

MRS. BOYLE (*opening the door and standing at it*): Here, get ou' o' this, Joxer Daly; I was always thinkin' you had a slate off.

JOXER (*moving to the door*): I have to laugh every time I look at the deep sea sailor; an' a row on a river ud make him sea-sick!

BOYLE: Get ou' o' this before I take the law into me own hands!

JOXER (*going out*): Say aw rewaeawr, but not good-bye. Lookin' for work, an' prayin' to God he won't get it! (*He goes.*)

MRS. BOYLE: I'm tired tellin' you what Joxer was; maybe now you see yourself the kind he is.

BOYLE: He'll never blow the froth off a pint o' mine agen, that's a sure thing. Johnny . . . Mary . . . you're to keep yourselves to yourselves for the future. Juno, I'm done with Joxer. . . . I'm a new man from this out. . . . (*Clasping* JUNO's *hand, and singing emotionally*):

> Oh, me darlin' Juno, I will be thrue to thee;
> Me own, me darlin' Juno, you're all the world to me.

(*The Curtain Falls.*)

Act Two

SCENE. *The same, but the furniture is more plentiful, and of a vulgar nature. A glaringly upholstered arm-chair and lounge; cheap pictures and photos everywhere. Every available spot is ornamented with huge vases filled with artificial flowers. Crossed festoons of coloured paper chains stretch from end to end of ceiling. On the table is an old attaché case. It is about six in the evening, and two days after the First Act.* BOYLE, *in his shirt sleeves, is voluptuously stretched on the sofa; he is smoking a clay pipe. He is half asleep. A lamp is lighting on the table. After a few moments' pause the voice of* JOXER *is heard singing softly outside at the door—"Me pipe I'll smoke, as I dhrive me moke—are you there, Mor . . . ee . . . ar . . . i . . teee!"*

BOYLE (*leaping up, takes a pen in his hand and busies himself with papers*): Come along, Joxer, me son, come along.

JOXER (*putting his head in*): Are you be yourself?

BOYLE: Come on, come on; that doesn't matther; I'm masther now, an' I'm goin' to remain masther.

(JOXER *comes in.*)

JOXER: How d'ye feel now, as a man o' money?

BOYLE (*solemnly*): It's a responsibility, Joxer, a great responsibility.

JOXER: I suppose 'tis now, though you wouldn't think it.

BOYLE: Joxer, han' me over that attackey case on the table there. (JOXER *hands the case*) Ever since the Will was passed I've run hundhreds o' dockyments through me han's—I tell you, you have to keep your wits about you. (*He busies himself with papers.*)

JOXER: Well, I won't disturb you; I'll dhrop in when . . .

BOYLE (*hastily*): It's all right, Joxer, this is the last one to be signed today. (*He signs a paper, puts it into the case, which he shuts with*

a snap, and sits back pompously in the chair) Now, Joxer, you want to see me; I'm at your service—what can I do for you, me man?

JOXER: I've just dhropped in with the £3 : 5s. that Mrs. Madigan riz on the blankets an' table for you, and she says you're to be in no hurry payin' it back.

BOYLE: She won't be long without it; I expect the first cheque for a couple o' hundhred any day. There's the five bob for yourself—go on, take it, man; it'll not be the last you'll get from the Captain. Now an' agen we have our differ, but we're there together all the time.

JOXER: Me for you, an' you for me, like the two Musketeers.

BOYLE: Father Farrell stopped me today an' tole me how glad he was I fell in for the money.

JOXER: He'll be stoppin' you ofen enough now; I suppose it was "Mr." Boyle with him?

BOYLE: He shuk me be the han'. . . .

JOXER (*ironically*): I met with Napper Tandy, an' he shuk me be the han'!

BOYLE: You're seldom asthray, Joxer, but you're wrong shipped this time. What you're sayin' of Father Farrell is very near to blasfeemey. I don't like any one to talk disrespectful of Father Farrell.

JOXER: You're takin' me up wrong, Captain; I wouldn't let a word be said agen Father Farrell—the heart o' the rowl, that's what he is; I always said he was a darlin' man, a daarlin' man.

BOYLE: Comin' up the stairs who did I meet but that bummer, Nugent. "I seen you talkin' to Father Farrell," says he, with a grin on him. "He'll be folleyin' you," says he, "like a Guardian Angel from this out"—all the time the oul' grin on him, Joxer.

JOXER: I never seen him yet but he had that oul' grin on him!

BOYLE: "Mr. Nugent," says I, "Father Farrell is a man o' the people, an', as far as I know the History of me country, the priests was always in the van of the fight for Irelan's freedom."

JOXER (*fervently*):

Who was it led the van, Soggart Aroon?
Since the fight first began, Soggart Aroon?

BOYLE: "Who are you tellin'?" says he. "Didn't they let down the Fenians, an' didn't they do in Parnell? An' now . . ." "You ought to be ashamed o' yourself," says I, interruptin' him, "not to know the History o' your country." An' I left him gawkin' where he was.

JOXER: Where ignorance 's bliss 'tis folly to be wise; I wondher did he ever read the Story o' Irelan'.

BOYLE: Be J. L. Sullivan? Don't you know he didn't?

JOXER: Ah, it's a darlin' buk, a daarlin' buk!

BOYLE: You'd betther be goin', now, Joxer, his Majesty, Bentham, 'll be here any minute, now.

JOXER: Be the way things is lookin', it'll be a match between him an' Mary. She's thrun over Jerry altogether. Well, I hope it will, for he's a darlin' man.

BOYLE: I'm glad you think so—I don't. (*Irritably*) What's darlin' about him?

JOXER (*nonplussed*): I only seen him twiced; if you want to know me, come an' live with me.

BOYLE: He's too ignified for me—to hear him talk you'd think he knew as much as a Boney's Oraculum. He's given up his job as teacher, an' is goin' to become a solicitor in Dublin—he's been studyin' law. I suppose he thinks I'll set him up, but he's wrong shipped. An' th' other fella—Jerry's as bad. The two o' them ud give you a pain in your face, listenin' to them; Jerry believin' in nothin', an' Bentham believin' in everythin'. One that says all is God an' no man; an' th' other that says all is man an' no God!

JOXER: Well, I'll be off now.

BOYLE: Don't forget to dhrop down afther a while; we'll have a quiet jar, an' a song or two.

JOXER: Never fear.

BOYLE: An' tell Mrs. Madigan that I hope we'll have the pleasure of her organization at our little enthertainment.

JOXER: Righto; we'll come down together. (*He goes out.*)

(JOHNNY *comes from room on left, and sits down moodily at the fire.* BOYLE *looks at him for a few moments, and shakes his head. He fills his pipe.*)

VOICE OF JUNO AT THE DOOR: Open the door, Jack; this thing has me nearly kilt with the weight.

(BOYLE *opens the door.* JUNO *enters carrying the box of a gramophone, followed by* MARY *carrying the horn, and some parcels.* JUNO *leaves the box on the table and flops into a chair.*)

JUNO: Carryin' that from Henry Street was no joke.

BOYLE: U-u-ugh, that's a grand lookin' insthrument—how much was it?

JUNO: Pound down, an' five to be paid at two shillin's a week.

BOYLE: That's reasonable enough.

JUNO: I'm afraid we're runnin' into too much debt; first the furniture, an' now this.

BOYLE: The whole lot won't be much out of £2000.

MARY: I don't know what you wanted a gramophone for—I know Charlie hates them; he says they're destructive of real music.

BOYLE: Desthructive of music—that fella ud give you a pain in your face. All a gramophone wants is to be properly played; its thrue wondher is only felt when everythin's quiet—what a gramophone wants is dead silence!

MARY: But, father, Jerry says the same; afther all, you can only appreciate music when your ear is properly trained.

BOYLE: That's another fella ud give you a pain in your face. Properly thrained! I suppose you couldn't appreciate football unless your fut was properly thrained.

MRS. BOYLE (*to* MARY): Go on in ower that an' dress, or Charlie 'll be in on you, an' tay nor nothin' 'll be ready.

(MARY *goes into room left.*)

MRS. BOYLE (*arranging table for tea*): You didn't look at our new gramophone, Johnny?

JOHNNY: 'Tisn't gramophones I'm thinking of.

MRS. BOYLE: An' what is it you're thinkin' of, allanna?

JOHNNY: Nothin', nothin', nothin'.

MRS. BOYLE: Sure, you must be thinkin' of somethin'; it's yourself that has yourself the way y'are; sleepin' wan night in me sisther's, an' the nex' in your father's brother's—you'll get no rest goin' on that way.

JOHNNY: I can rest nowhere, nowhere, nowhere.

MRS. BOYLE: Sure, you're not thryin' to rest anywhere.

JOHNNY: Let me alone, let me alone, let me alone, for God's sake.

(*A knock at street door.*)

MRS. BOYLE (*in a flutter*): Here he is; here's Mr. Bentham!

BOYLE: Well, there's room for him; it's a pity there's not a brass band to play him in.

MRS. BOYLE: We'll han' the tay around, an' not be clusthered round the table, as if we never seen nothin'.

(*Steps are heard approaching, and* JUNO, *opening the door, allows* BENTHAM *to enter.*)

JUNO: Give your hat an' stick to Jack, there . . . sit down, Mr. Bentham . . . no, not there . . . in th' easy chair be the fire . . . there, that's betther. Mary'll be out to you in a minute.

BOYLE (*solemnly*): I seen be the paper this mornin' that Consols was down half per cent. That's serious, min' you, an' shows the whole counthry's in a state o' chassis.

MRS. BOYLE: What's Consols, Jack?

BOYLE: Consols? Oh, Consols is—oh, there's no use tellin' women what Consols is—th' wouldn't undherstand.

BENTHAM: It's just as you were saying, Mr. Boyle . . .

(MARY *enters charmingly dressed.*)

BENTHAM: Oh, good evening, Mary; how pretty you're looking!

MARY (*archly*): Am I?

BOYLE: We were just talkin' when you kem in, Mary, I was tellin' Mr. Bentham that the whole counthry's in a state o' chassis.

MARY (*to* BENTHAM): Would you prefer the green or the blue ribbon round me hair, Charlie?

MRS. BOYLE: Mary, your father's speakin'.

BOYLE (*rapidly*): I was jus' tellin' Mr. Bentham that the whole counthry's in a state o' chassis.

MARY: I'm sure you're frettin', da, whether it is or no.

MRS. BOYLE: With all our churches an' religions, the worl's not a bit the betther.

BOYLE (*with a commanding gesture*): Tay!

(MARY *and* MRS. BOYLE *dispense the tea.*)

MRS. BOYLE: An' Irelan's takin' a leaf out o' the worl's buk; when we got the makin' of our own laws I thought we'd never stop to look behind us, but instead of that we never stopped to look before us! If the people ud folly up their religion betther there'd be a betther chance for us—what do you think, Mr. Bentham?

BENTHAM: I'm afraid I can't venture to express an opinion on that point, Mrs. Boyle; dogma has no attraction for me.

MRS. BOYLE: I forgot you didn't hold with us; what's this you said you were?

BENTHAM: A Theosophist, Mrs. Boyle.

MRS. BOYLE: An' what in the name o' God's a Theosophist?

BOYLE: A Theosophist, Juno, 's a—tell her, Mr. Bentham, tell her.

BENTHAM: It's hard to explain in a few words: Theosophy's founded on The Vedas, the religious books of the East. Its central theme is

the existence of an all-pervading Spirit—the Life-Breath. Nothing really exists but this one Universal Life-Breath. And whatever even seems to exist separately from this Life-Breath, doesn't really exist at all. It is all vital force in man, in all animals, and in all vegetation. This Life-Breath is called the Prawna.

MRS. BOYLE: The Prawna! What a comical name!

BOYLE: Prawna; yis, the Prawna. (*Blowing gently through his lips*) That's the Prawna!

MRS. BOYLE: Whist, whist, Jack.

BENTHAM: The happiness of man depends upon his sympathy with this Spirit. Men who have reached a high state of excellence are called Yogi. Some men become Yogi in a short time, it may take others millions of years.

BOYLE: Yogi! I seen hundhreds of them in the streets o' San Francisco.

BENTHAM: It is said by these Yogi that if we practise certain mental exercises that we would have powers denied to others—for instance, the faculty of seeing things that happen miles and miles away.

MRS. BOYLE: I wouldn't care to meddle with that sort o' belief; it's a very curious religion, altogether.

BOYLE: What's curious about it? Isn't all religions curious? If they weren't, you wouldn't get any one to believe them. But religions is passin' away—they've had their day like everything else. Take the real Dublin people, f'rinstance: they know more about Charlie Chaplin an' Tommy Mix than they do about SS. Peter an' Paul!

MRS. BOYLE: You don't believe in ghosts, Mr. Bentham?

MARY: Don't you know he doesn't, mother?

BENTHAM: I don't know that, Mary. Scientists are beginning to think that what we call ghosts are sometimes seen by persons of a certain nature. They say that sensational actions, such as the killing of a person, demand great energy, and that that energy lingers in the place where the action occurred. People may live in the place and see nothing, when some one may come along whose personality has some peculiar connection with the energy of the place, and, in a flash, the person sees the whole affair.

JOHNNY (*rising swiftly, pale and affected*): What sort o' talk is this to be goin' on with? Is there nothin' betther to be talkin' about but the killin' o' people? My God, isn't it bad enough for these things to happen without talkin' about them! (*He hurriedly goes into the room on left.*)

BENTHAM: Oh, I'm very sorry, Mrs. Boyle; I never thought . . .

MRS. BOYLE (*apologetically*): Never mind, Mr. Bentham, he's very touchy. (*A frightened scream is heard from* JOHNNY *inside.*)

MRS. BOYLE: Mother of God? What's that?

(*He rushes out again, his face pale, his lips twitching, his limbs trembling.*)

JOHNNY: Shut the door, shut the door, quick, for God's sake! Great God, have mercy on me! Blessed Mother o' God, shelter me, shelter your son!

MRS. BOYLE (*catching him in her arms*): What's wrong with you? What ails you? Sit down, sit down, here, on the bed . . . there now . . . there now.

MARY: Johnny, Johnny, what ails you?

JOHNNY: I seen him, I seen him . . . kneelin' in front o' the statue . . . merciful Jesus, have pity on me!

MRS. BOYLE (*to* BOYLE): Get him a glass o' whisky . . . quick, man, an' don't stand gawkin'.

(BOYLE *gets the whisky.*)

JOHNNY: Sit here, sit here, mother . . . between me an' the door.

MRS. BOYLE: I'll sit beside you as long as you like, only tell me what was it came across you at all?

JOHNNY (*after taking some drink*): I seen him. . . . I seen Robbie Tancred kneelin' down before the statue . . . an' the red light shinin' on him . . . an' when I went in . . . he turned an' looked at me . . . an' I seen the woun's bleedin' in his breast. . . . Oh, why did he look at me like that . . . it wasn't my fault that he was done in . . . Mother o' God, keep him away from me!

MRS. BOYLE: There, there, child, you've imagined it all. There was nothin' there at all—it was the red light you seen, an' the talk we had put all the rest into your head. Here, dhrink more o' this—it'll do you good. . . . An', now, stretch yourself down on the bed for a little. (*To* BOYLE) Go in, Jack, an' show him it was only in his own head it was.

BOYLE (*making no move*): E-e-e-e-eh; it's all nonsense; it was only a shadda he saw.

MARY: Mother o' God, he made me heart lep!

BENTHAM: It was simply due to an overwrought imagination—we all get that way at times.

MRS. BOYLE: There, dear, lie down in the bed, an' I'll put the quilt across you . . . e-e-e-eh, that's it . . . you'll be as right as the mail in a few minutes.

JOHNNY: Mother, go into the room an' see if the light's lightin' before the statue.

MRS. BOYLE (*to* BOYLE): Jack, run in, an' see if the light's lightin' before the statue.

BOYLE (*to* MARY): Mary, slip in an' see if the light's lightin' before the statue.

(MARY *hesitates to go in.*)

BENTHAM: It's all right; Mary, I'll go. (*He goes into the room; remains for a few moments, and returns.*)

BENTHAM: Everything's just as it was—the light burning bravely before the statue.

BOYLE: Of course; I knew it was all nonsense.

(*A knock at the door.*)

BOYLE (*going to open the door*): E-e-e-e-eh. (*He opens it, and* JOXER, *followed by* MRS. MADIGAN, *enters.* MRS. MADIGAN *is a strong, dapper little woman of about forty-five; her face is almost always a wide-spread smile of complacency. She is a woman who, in a manner at least, can mourn with them that mourn, and rejoice with them that do rejoice. When she is feeling comfortable, she is inclined to*

be reminiscent; when others say anything, or following a statement made by herself, she has a habit of putting her head a little to one side, and nodding it rapidly several times in succession, like a bird pecking at a hard berry. Indeed, she has a good deal of the bird in her, but the bird instinct is by no means a melodious one. She is ignorant, vulgar and forward, but her heart is generous withal. For instance, she would help a neighbour's sick child; she would probably kill the child, but her intentions would be to cure it; she would be more at home helping a drayman to lift a fallen horse. She is dressed in a rather soiled grey dress and a vivid purple blouse; in her hair is a huge comb, ornamented with huge coloured beads. She enters with a gliding step, beaming smile and nodding head. BOYLE *receives them effusively.*)

BOYLE: Come on in, Mrs. Madigan; come on in; I was afraid you weren't comin'. . . . (*Slyly*) There's some people able to dhress, ay, Joxer?

JOXER: Fair as the blossoms that bloom in the May, an' sweet as the scent of the new mown hay. . . . Ah, well she may wear them.

MRS. MADIGAN (*looking at* MARY): I know some as are as sweet as the blossoms in the May—oh, no names, no pack dhrill!

BOYLE: An', now, I'll inthroduce the pair o' yous to Mary's intended: Mr. Bentham, this is Mrs. Madigan, an oul' back-parlour neighbour, that, if she could help it at all, ud never see a body shuk!

BENTHAM (*rising, and tentatively shaking the hand of* MRS. MADIGAN): I'm sure, it's a great pleasure to know you, Mrs. Madigan.

MRS. MADIGAN: An' I'm goin' to tell you, Mr. Bentham, you're goin' to get as nice a bit o' skirt in Mary, there, as ever you seen in your puff. Not like some of the dhressed up dolls that's knockin' about lookin' for men when it's a skelpin' they want. I remember as well as I remember yestherday, the day she was born—of a Tuesday, the 25th o' June, in the year 1901, at thirty-three minutes past wan in the day be Foley's clock, the pub at the corner o' the street. A cowld day it was too, for the season o' the year, an' I remember sayin' to Joxer, there, who I met comin' up th' stairs, that the new arrival in Boyle's ud grow up a hardy chiselur if it lived, an' that she'd be somethin' one o' these days that nobody suspected, an' so signs on it, here she is today, goin' to be married to a young man lookin' as if he'd be fit to commensurate in any position in life it ud please God to call him!

BOYLE (*effusively*): Sit down, Mrs. Madigan, sit down, me oul' sport. (*To* BENTHAM) This is Joxer Daly, Past Chief Ranger of the Dear Little Shamrock Branch of the Irish National Foresters, an oul' front-top neighbour, that never despaired, even in the darkest days of Ireland's sorra.

JOXER: Nil desperandum, Captain, nil desperandum.

BOYLE: Sit down, Joxer, sit down. The two of us was often in a tight corner.

MRS. BOYLE: Ay, in Foley's snug!

JOXER: An' we kem out of it flyin', we kem out of it flyin', Captain.

BOYLE: An', now, for a dhrink—I know yous won't refuse an oul' friend.

MRS. MADIGAN (*to* JUNO): Is Johnny not well, Mrs. . . .

MRS. BOYLE (*warningly*): S-s-s-sh.

MRS. MADIGAN: Oh, the poor darlin'.

BOYLE: Well, Mrs. Madigan, is it tay or what?

MRS. MADIGAN: Well, speakin' for meself, I jus' had me tea a minute ago, an' I'm afraid to dhrink any more—I'm never the same when I dhrink too much tay. Thanks, all the same, Mr. Boyle.

BOYLE: Well, what about a bottle o' stout or a dhrop o' whisky?

MRS. MADIGAN: A bottle o' stout ud be a little too heavy for me stummock afther me tay. . . . A-a-ah, I'll thry the ball o' malt.

(BOYLE *prepares the whisky.*)

MRS. MADIGAN: There's nothin' like a ball o' malt occasional like—too much of it isn't good. (*To* BOYLE, *who is adding water*) Ah, God, Johnny, don't put too much wather on it! (*She drinks*) I suppose yous'll be lavin' this place.

BOYLE: I'm looking for a place near the sea; I'd like the place that you might say was me cradle, to be me grave as well. The sea is always callin' me.

JOXER: She is callin', callin', callin', in the win, an' on the sea.

BOYLE: Another dhrop o' whisky, Mrs. Madigan?

MRS. MADIGAN: Well, now, it ud be hard to refuse seein' the suspicious times that's in it.

BOYLE (*with a commanding gesture*): Song! . . . Juno . . . Mary . . . "Home to Our Mount'ins"!

MRS. MADIGAN (*enthusiastically*): Hear, hear!

JOXER: Oh, tha's a darlin' song, a daarlin' song!

MARY (*bashfully*): Ah, no, da; I'm not in a singin' humour.

MRS. MADIGAN: Gawn with you, child, an' you only goin' to be marrid; I remember as well as I remember yestherday,—it was on a lovely August evenin', exactly, accordin' to date, fifteen years ago, come the Tuesday folleyin' the nex' that's comin' on, when me own man (*the Lord be good to him*) an' me was sittin' shy together in a doty little nook on a counthry road, adjacent to The Stiles. "That'll scratch your lovely, little white neck," says he, ketchin' hould of a danglin' bramble branch, holdin' clusters of the loveliest flowers you ever seen, an' breakin' it off, so that his arm fell, accidental like, roun' me waist, an' as I felt it tightenin', an' tightenin', an' tightenin', I thought me buzzum was every minute goin' to burst out into a roystherin' song about

> The little green leaves that were shakin' on the threes,
> The gallivantin' butterflies, an' buzzin' o' the bees!

BOYLE: Ordher for the song!

JUNO: Come on, Mary—we'll do our best. (JUNO *and* MARY *stand up, and choosing a suitable position, sing simply "Home to Our Mountains."*)

(*They bow to company, and return to their places.*)

BOYLE (*emotionally, at the end of the song*): Lull . . . me . . . to . . . rest!

JOXER (*clapping his hands*): Bravo, bravo! Darlin' girulls, darlin' girulls!

MRS. MADIGAN: Juno, I never seen you in betther form.

BENTHAM: Very nicely rendered indeed.

MRS. MADIGAN: A noble call, a noble call!

MRS. BOYLE: What about yourself, Mrs. Madigan? (*After some coaxing,* MRS. MADIGAN *rises, and in a quavering voice sings the following verse*):

If I were a blackbird I'd whistle and sing;
I'd follow the ship that my thrue love was in;
An' on the top riggin', I'd there build me nest,
An' at night I would sleep on me Willie's white breast!

(*Becoming husky, amid applause, she sits down.*)

MRS. MADIGAN: Ah, me voice is too husky now, Juno; though I remember the time when Maisie Madigan could sing like a nightingale at matin' time. I remember as well as I remember yestherday, at a party given to celebrate the comin' of the first chiselur to Annie an' Benny Jimeson—who was the barber, yous may remember, in Henrietta Street, that, afther Easter Week, hung out a green, white an' orange pole, an', then, when the Tans started their Jazz dancin', whipped it in agen, an' stuck out a red, white an' blue wan instead, given as an excuse that a barber's pole was strictly non-political—singin' "An' You'll Remember Me," with the top notes quiverin' in a dead hush of pethrified attention, folleyed by a clappin' o' han's that shuk the tumblers on the table, an' capped be Jimeson, the barber, sayin' that it was the best rendherin' of "You'll Remember Me" he ever heard in his natural!

BOYLE (*peremptorily*): Ordher for Joxer's song!

JOXER: Ah, no, I couldn't; don't ass me, Captain.

BOYLE: Joxer's song, Joxer's song—give us wan of your shut-eyed wans. (JOXER *settles himself in his chair; takes a drink; clears his throat; solemnly closes his eyes, and begin to sing in a very querulous voice*):

She is far from the lan' where her young hero sleeps,
An' lovers around her are sighing (*He hesitates*)
An' lovers around her are sighin' . . . sighin' . . . sighin' . . .

(*A pause.*)

BOYLE (*imitating* JOXER):

And lovers around her are sighing!

What's the use of you thryin' to sing the song if you don't know it?

MARY: Thry another one, Mr. Daly—maybe you'd be more fortunate.

MRS. MADIGAN: Gawn, Joxer, thry another wan.

JOXER (*starting again*):

I have heard the mavis singin' his love song to the morn;
I have seen the dew-dhrop clingin' to the rose jus' newly born;
but . . . but . . . (*frantically*) to the rose jus' newly born
. . . newly born . . . born.

JOHNNY: Mother, put on the gramophone, for God's sake, an' stop Joxer's bawlin'.

BOYLE (*commandingly*): Gramophone! . . . I hate to see fellas thryin' to do what they're not able to do. (BOYLE *arranges the gramophone, and is about to start it, when voices are heard of persons descending the stairs.*)

MRS. BOYLE (*warningly*): Whisht, Jack, don't put it on, don't put it on yet; this must be poor Mrs. Tancred comin' down to go to the hospital—I forgot all about them bringin' the body to the church tonight. Open the door, Mary, an' give them a bit o' light.

(MARY *opens the door, and* MRS. TANCRED—*a very old woman, obviously shaken by the death of her son—appears, accompanied by several neighbours. The first few phrases are spoken before they appear.*)

FIRST NEIGHBOUR: It's a sad journey we're goin' on, but God's good, an' the Republicans won't be always down.

MRS. TANCRED: Ah, what good is that to me now? Whether they're up or down—it won't bring me darlin' boy from the grave.

MRS. BOYLE: Come in an' have a hot cup o' tay, Mrs. Tancred, before you go.

MRS. TANCRED: Ah, I can take nothin' now, Mrs. Boyle—I won't be long afther him.

FIRST NEIGHBOUR: Still an' all, he died a noble death, an' we'll bury him like a king.

MRS. TANCRED: An' I'll go on livin' like a pauper. Ah, what's the pains I suffered bringin' him into the world to carry him to his cradle, to the pains I'm sufferin' now, carryin' him out o' the world to bring him to his grave!

MARY: It would be better for you not to go at all, Mrs. Tancred, but to stay at home beside the fire with some o' the neighbours.

MRS. TANCRED: I seen the first of him, an' I'll see the last of him.

MRS. BOYLE: You'd want a shawl, Mrs. Tancred; it's a cowld night, an' the win's blowin' sharp.

MRS. MADIGAN (*rushing out*): I've a shawl above.

MRS. TANCRED: Me home is gone, now; he was me only child, an' to think that he was lyin' for a whole night stretched out on the side of a lonely counthry lane, with his head, his darlin' head, that I ofen kissed an' fondled, half hidden in the wather of a runnin' brook. An' I'm told he was the leadher of the ambush where me nex' door neighbour, Mrs. Mannin', lost her Free State soldier son. An' now here's the two of us oul' women, standin' one on each side of a scales o' sorra, balanced be the bodies of our two dead darlin' sons. (MRS. MADIGAN *returns, and wraps a shawl around her*) God bless you, Mrs. Madigan. . . . (*She moves slowly towards the door*) Mother o' God, Mother o' God, have pity on the pair of us! . . . O Blessed Virgin, where were you when me darlin' son was riddled with bullets, when me darlin' son was riddled with bullets! . . . Sacred Heart of the Crucified Jesus, take away our hearts o' stone . . . an' give us hearts o' flesh! . . . Take away this murdherin' hate . . . an' give us Thine own eternal love! (*They pass out of the room.*)

MRS. BOYLE (*explanatorily to* BENTHAM): That was Mrs. Tancred of the two-pair back; her son was found, e'er yestherday, lyin' out beyant Finglas riddled with bullets. A die-hard he was, be all acqunts. He was a nice quiet boy, but lattherly he went to hell, with his Republic first, an' Republic last an' Republic over all. He ofen took tea with us here, in the oul' days, an' Johnny, there, an' him used to be always together.

JOHNNY: Am I always to be havin' to tell you that he was no friend o' mine? I never cared for him, an' he could never stick me. It's not because he was Commandant of the Battalion that I was Quarther-Masther of, that we were friends.

MRS. BOYLE: He's gone, now—the Lord be good to him! God help his poor oul' creature of a mother, for no matther whose friend or enemy he was, he was her poor son.

BENTHAM: The whole thing is terrible, Mrs. Boyle; but the only way to deal with a mad dog is to destroy him.

MRS. BOYLE: An' to think of me forgettin' about him bein' brought to the church tonight, an' we singin' an' all, but it was well we hadn't the gramophone goin', anyhow.

BOYLE: Even if we had aself. We've nothin' to do with these things, one way or t'other. That's the Government's business, an' let them do what we're payin' them for doin'.

MRS. BOYLE: I'd like to know how a body's not to mind these things; look at the way they're afther leavin' the people in this very house. Hasn't the whole house, nearly, been massacreed? There's young Mrs. Dougherty's husband with his leg off; Mrs. Travers that had her son blew up be a mine in Inchegeela, in Co. Cork; Mrs. Mannin' that lost wan of her sons in an ambush a few weeks ago, an' now, poor Mrs. Tancred's only child gone West with his body made a collandher of. Sure, if it's not our business, I don't know whose business it is.

BOYLE: Here, there, that's enough about them things; they don't affect us, an' we needn't give a damn. If they want a wake, well, let them have a wake. When I was a sailor, I was always resigned to meet with a watery grave; an', if they want to be soldiers, well, there's no use o' them squealin' when they meet a soldier's fate.

JOXER: Let me like a soldier fall—me breast expandin' to th' ball!

MRS. BOYLE: In wan way, she deserves all she got; for lately, she let th' die-hards make an open house of th' place; an' for th' last couple of months, either when th' sun was risin', or when th' sun was settin', you had C.I.D. men burstin' into your room, assin' you where were you born, where were you christened, where were you married, an' where would you be buried!

JOHNNY: For God's sake, let us have no more o' this talk.

MRS. MADIGAN: What about Mr. Boyle's song before we start th' gramophone?

MARY (*getting her hat, and putting it on*): Mother, Charlie and I are goin' out for a little sthroll.

MRS. BOYLE: All right, darlin'.

BENTHAM (*going out with* MARY): We won't be long away, Mrs. Boyle.

MRS. MADIGAN: Gwan, Captain, gwan.

BOYLE: E-e-e-e-eh, I'd want to have a few more jars in me, before I'd be in fettle for singin'.

JOXER: Give us that poem you writ t'other day. (*To the rest*) Aw, it's a darlin' poem, a daarlin' poem.

MRS. BOYLE: God bless us, is he startin' to write poetry!

BOYLE (*rising to his feet*): E-e-e-e-eh. (*He recites in an emotional, consequential manner the following verses*):

Shawn an' I were friends, sir, to me he was all in all.
His work was very heavy and his wages were very small.
None betther on th' beach as Docker, I'll go bail,
'Tis now I'm feelin' lonely, for today he lies in jail.
He was not what some call pious—seldom at church or prayer;
For the greatest scoundrels I know, sir, goes every Sunday there.
Fond of his pint—well, rather, but hated the Boss by creed
But never refused a copper to comfort a pal in need.

E-e-e-e-eh. (*He sits down.*)

MRS. MADIGAN: Grand, grand; you should folley that up, you should folley that up.

JOXER: It's a daarlin' poem!

BOYLE (*delightedly*): E-e-e-e-eh.

JOHNNY: Are yous goin' to put on th' gramophone tonight, or are yous not?

MRS. BOYLE: Gwan, Jack, put on a record.

MRS. MADIGAN: Gwan, Captain, gwan.

BOYLE: Well, yous'll want to keep a dead silence. (*He sets a record, starts the machine, and it begins to play "If you're Irish, come into*

the Parlour." As the tune is in full blare, the door is suddenly opened by a brisk, little bald-headed man, dressed circumspectly in a black suit; he glares fiercely at all in the room; he is "NEEDLE NUGENT," *a tailor. He carries his hat in his hands.*)

NUGENT (*loudly, above the noise of the gramophone*): Are yous goin' to have that thing bawlin' an' the funeral of Mrs. Tancred's son passin' the house? Have none of yous any respect for the Irish people's National regard for the dead?

(BOYLE *stops the gramophone.*)

MRS. BOYLE: Maybe, Needle Nugent, it's nearly time we had a little less respect for the dead, an' a little more regard for the livin'.

MRS. MADIGAN: We don't want you, Mr. Nugent, to teach us what we learned at our mother's knee. You don't look yourself as if you were dyin' of grief; if y'ass Maisie Madigan anything, I'd call you a real thrue die-hard an' live-soft Republican, attendin' Republican funerals in the day, an' stoppin' up half the night makin' suits for the Civic Guards! (*Persons are heard running down to the street, some saying, "Here it is, here it is."* NUGENT *withdraws, and the rest, except* JOHNNY, *go to the window looking into the street, and look out. Sounds of a crowd coming nearer are heard; portion are singing*):

To Jesus' Heart all burning
With fervent love for men,
My heart with fondest yearning
Shall raise its joyful strain.
While ages course along,
Blest be with loudest song,
The Sacred Heart of Jesus
By every heart and tongue.

MRS. BOYLE: Here's the hearse, here's the hearse!

BOYLE: There's t'oul' mother walkin' behin' the coffin.

MRS. MADIGAN: You can hardly see the coffin with the wreaths.

JOXER: Oh, it's a darlin' funeral, a daarlin' funeral!

MRS. MADIGAN: We'd have a betther view from the street.

BOYLE: Yes—this place ud give you a crick in your neck. (*They leave the room, and go down.* JOHNNY *sits moodily by the fire.*)

(*A young man enters; he looks at* JOHNNY *for a moment.*)

THE YOUNG MAN: Quarther-Master Boyle.

JOHNNY (*with a start*): The Mobilizer!

THE YOUNG MAN: You're not at the funeral?

JOHNNY: I'm not well.

THE YOUNG MAN: I'm glad I've found you; you were stoppin' at your aunt's; I called there but you'd gone. I've to give you an ordher to attend a Battalion Staff meetin' the night afther tomorrow.

JOHNNY: Where?

THE YOUNG MAN: I don't know; you're to meet me at the Pillar at eight o'clock; then we're to go to a place I'll be told of tonight; there we'll meet a mothor that'll bring us to the meeting. They think you might be able to know somethin' about them that gave the bend where Commandant Tancred was shelterin'.

JOHNNY: I'm not goin', then. I know nothing about Tancred.

THE YOUNG MAN (*at the door*): You'd betther come for your own sake—remember your oath.

JOHNNY (*passionately*): I won't go! Haven't I done enough for Ireland! I've lost me arm, an' me hip's desthroyed so that I'll never be able to walk right agen! Good God, haven't I done enough for Ireland?

THE YOUNG MAN: Boyle, no man can do enough for Ireland! (*He goes.*)

(*Faintly in the distance the crowd is heard saying:*)

Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with Thee;
Blessed art Thou amongst women, and blessed, etc.

(*The Curtain Falls.*)

Act Three

SCENE: *The same as Act Two. It is about half-past six on a November evening; a bright fire is burning in the grate;* MARY, *dressed to go out, is sitting on a chair by the fire, leaning forward, her hands under her chin, her elbows on her knees. A look of dejection, mingled with uncertain anxiety, is on her face. A lamp, turned low, is lighting on the table. The votive light under the picture of the Virgin, gleams more redly than ever.* MRS. BOYLE *is putting on her hat and coat. It is two months later.*

MRS. BOYLE: An' has Bentham never even written to you since—not one line for the past month?

MARY (*tonelessly*): Not even a line, mother.

MRS. BOYLE: That's very curious. . . . What came between the two of yous at all? To leave you so sudden, an' yous so great together. . . . To go away t' England, an' not to even leave you his address. . . . The way he was always bringin' you to dances, I thought he was mad afther you. Are you sure you said nothin' to him?

MARY: No, mother—at least nothing that could possibly explain his givin' me up.

MRS. BOYLE: You know you're a bit hasty at times, Mary, an' say things you shouldn't say.

MARY: I never said to him what I shouldn't say, I'm sure of that.

MRS. BOYLE: How are you sure of it?

MARY: Because I love him with all my heart and soul, mother. Why, I don't know; I often thought to myself that he wasn't the man poor Jerry was, but I couldn't help loving him, all the same.

MRS. BOYLE: But you shouldn't be frettin' the way you are; when a woman loses a man, she never knows what she's afther losin', to be

sure, but, then, she never knows what she's afther gainin', either. You're not the one girl of a month ago—you look like one pinin' away. It's long ago I had a right to bring you to the doctor, instead of waitin' till tonight.

MARY: There's no necessity, really, mother, to go to the doctor; nothing serious is wrong with me—I'm run down and disappointed, that's all.

MRS. BOYLE: I'll not wait another minute; I don't like the look of you at all. . . . I'm afraid we made a mistake in throwin' over poor Jerry. . . . He'd have been betther for you than that Bentham.

MARY: Mother, the best man for a woman is the one for whom she has the most love, and Charlie had it all.

MRS. BOYLE: Well, there's one thing to be said for him—he couldn't have been thinkin' of the money, or he wouldn't ha' left you . . . it must ha' been somethin' else.

MARY (*wearily*): I don't know . . . I don't know, mother . . . only I think . . .

MRS. BOYLE: What d'ye think?

MARY: I imagine . . . he thought . . . we weren't . . . good enough for him.

MRS. BOYLE: An' what was he himself, only a school teacher? Though I don't blame him for fightin' shy of people like that Joxer fella an' that oul' Madigan wan—nice sort o' people for your father to inthroduce to a man like Mr. Bentham. You might have told me all about this before now, Mary; I don't know why you like to hide everything from your mother; you knew Bentham, an' I'd ha' known nothin' about it if it hadn't bin for the Will; an' it was only today, afther long coaxin', that you let out that he'd left you.

MARY: It would have been useless to tell you—you wouldn't understand.

MRS. BOYLE (*hurt*): Maybe not. . . . Maybe I wouldn't understand. . . . Well, we'll be off now. (*She goes over to the door left, and speaks to* BOYLE *inside.*)

MRS. BOYLE: We're goin' now to the doctor's. Are you goin' to get up this evenin'?

BOYLE (*from inside*): The pains in me legs is terrible! It's me should be poppin' off to the doctor instead o' Mary, the way I feel.

MRS. BOYLE: Sorra mend you! A nice way you were in last night—carried in a frog's march, dead to the world. If that's the way you'll go on when you get the money it'll be the grave for you, an asylum for me and the Poorhouse for Johnny.

BOYLE: I thought you were goin'?

MRS. BOYLE: That's what has you as you are—you can't bear to be spoken to. Knowin' the way we are, up to our ears in debt, it's a wondher you wouldn't ha' got up to go to th' solicitor's an' see if we could ha' gettin' a little o' the money even.

BOYLE (*shouting*): I can't be goin' up there night, noon an' mornin', can I? He can't give the money till he gets it, can he? I can't get blood out of a turnip, can I?

MRS. BOYLE: It's nearly two months since we heard of the Will, an' the money seems as far off as ever. . . . I suppose you know we owe twenty poun's to oul' Murphy?

BOYLE: I've a faint recollection of you tellin' me that before.

MRS. BOYLE: Well, you'll go over to the shop yourself for the things in future—I'll face him no more.

BOYLE: I thought you said you were goin'?

MRS. BOYLE: I'm goin' now; come on, Mary.

BOYLE: Ey, Juno, ey!

MRS. BOYLE: Well, what d'ye want now?

BOYLE: Is there e'er a bottle o' stout left?

MRS. BOYLE: There's two o' them here still.

BOYLE: Show us in one o' them an' leave t'other there till I get up. An' throw us in the paper that's on the table, an' the bottle o' Sloan's Liniment that's in th' drawer.

MRS. BOYLE (*getting the liniment and the stout*): What paper is it you want—the *Messenger?*

BOYLE: *Messenger! The News o' the World!*

(MRS. BOYLE *brings in the things asked for and comes out again.*)

MRS. BOYLE (*at door*): Mind the candle, now, an' don't burn the house over our heads. I left t'other bottle o' stout on the table. (*She puts bottle of stout on table. She goes out with* MARY. *A cork is heard popping inside.*)

(*A pause; then outside the door is heard the voice of* JOXER *lilting softly*: "*Me pipe I'll smoke, as I dhrive me moke . . . are you . . . there . . . More . . . aar . . . i . . . tee!*" *A gentle knock is heard and, after a pause, the door opens, and* JOXER, *followed by* NUGENT, *enters.*)

JOXER: Be God, they must all be out; I was thinkin' there was somethin' up when he didn't answer the signal. We seen Juno an' Mary goin', but I didn't see him, an' it's very seldom he escapes me.

NUGENT: He's not goin' to escape me—he's not goin' to be let go to the fair altogether.

JOXER: Sure, the house couldn't hould them lately; an' he goin' about like a mastherpiece of the Free State counthry; forgettin' their friends; forgettin' God—wouldn't even lift his hat passin' a chapel! Sure they were bound to get a dhrop! An' you really think there's no money comin' to him afther all?

NUGENT: Not as much as a red rex, man; I've been a bit anxious this long time over me money, an' I went up to the solicitor's to find out all I could—ah, man, they were goin' to throw me down the stairs. They toul' me that the oul' cock himself had the stairs worn away comin' up afther it, an' they black in the face tellin' him he'd get nothin'. Some way or another that the Will is writ he won't be entitled to get as much as a make!

JOXER: Ah, I thought there was somethin' curious about the whole thing; I've bin havin' sthrange dreams for the last couple o' weeks. An' I notice that that Bentham fella doesn't be comin' here now—there must be somethin' on the mat there too. Anyhow, who, in the name o' God, ud leave anythin' to that oul' bummer? Sure it ud be unnatural. An' the way Juno an' him's been throwin' their weight about for the last few months! Ah, him that goes a borrowin' goes a sorrowin'!

NUGENT: Well, he's not goin' to throw his weight about in the suit I made for him much longer. I'm tellin' you seven poun's aren't to be found growin' on the bushes these days.

JOXER: An' there isn't hardly a neighbour in the whole street that hasn't lent him money on the strength of what he was goin' to get, but they're after backing the wrong horse. Wasn't it a mercy o' God that I'd nothin' to give him! The softy I am, you know, I'd ha' lent him me last juice! I must have had somebody's good prayers. Ah, afther all, an honest man's the noblest work o' God!

(BOYLE *coughs inside.*)

JOXER: Whisht, damn it, he must be inside in bed.

NUGENT: Inside o' bed or outside of it he's goin' to pay me for that suit, or give it back—he'll not climb up my back as easily as he thinks.

JOXER: Gwan in at wanst, man, an' get if off him, an' don't be a fool.

NUGENT (*going to the door left, opening it and looking in*): Ah, don't disturb yourself, Mr. Boyle; I hope you're not sick?

BOYLE: Th' oul' legs, Mr. Nugent, the oul' legs.

NUGENT: I just called over to see if you could let me have anything off the suit?

BOYLE: E-e-e-eh, how much is this it is?

NUGENT: It's the same as it was at the start—seven poun's.

BOYLE: I'm glad you kem, Mr. Nugent; I want a good heavy top-coat—Irish frieze, if you have it. How much would a top-coat like that be now?

NUGENT: About six poun's.

BOYLE: Six poun's—six an' seven, six an' seven is thirteen—that'll be thirteen poun's I'll owe you.

(JOXER *slips the bottle of stout that is on the table into his pocket.* NUGENT *rushes into the room, and returns with the suit on his arm; he pauses at the door.*)

NUGENT: You'll owe me no thirteen poun's. Maybe you think you're betther able to owe it than pay it!

BOYLE (*frantically*): Here, come back to hell ower that—where're you goin' with them clothes o' mine?

NUGENT: Where am I goin' with them clothes o' yours? Well, I like your damn cheek!

BOYLE: Here, what am I going to dhress meself in when I'm goin' out?

NUGENT: What do I care what you dhress yourself in? You can put yourself in a bolsther cover, if you like. (*He goes towards the other door, followed by* JOXER.)

JOXER: What'll he dhress himself in! Gentleman Jack an' his frieze coat!

(*They go out.*)

BOYLE (*inside*): Ey, Nugent, ey, Mr. Nugent, Mr. Nugent!

(*After a pause* BOYLE *enters hastily, buttoning the braces of his moleskin trousers; his coat and vest are on his arm; he throws these on a chair and hurries to the door on right.*)

BOYLE: Ey, Mr. Nugent, Mr. Nugent!

JOXER (*meeting him at the door*): What's up, what's wrong, Captain?

BOYLE: Nugent's been here an' took away me suit—the only things I had to go out in!

JOXER: Tuk your suit—for God's sake! An' what were you doin' while he was takin' them?

BOYLE: I was in bed when he stole in like a thief in the night, an' before I knew even what he was thinkin' of, he whipped them from the chair, an' was off like a redshank!

JOXER: An' what, in the name o' God, did he do that for?

BOYLE: What did he do it for? How the hell do I know what he done it for? Jealousy an' spite, I suppose.

JOXER: Did he not say what he done it for?

BOYLE: Amn't I afther tellin' you that he had them whipped up an' was gone before I could open me mouth?

JOXER: That was a very sudden thing to do; there mus' be somethin' behin' it. Did he hear anythin', I wondher?

BOYLE: Did he hear anythin'?—you talk very queer, Joxer—what could he hear?

JOXER: About you not gettin' the money, in some way or t'other?

BOYLE: An' what ud prevent me from gettin' th' money?

JOXER: That's jus' what I was thinkin'—what ud prevent you from gettin' the money—nothin', as far as I can see.

BOYLE (*looking round for bottle of stout with an exclamation*): Aw, holy God!

JOXER: What's up, Jack?

BOYLE: He must have afther lifted the bottle o' stout that Juno left on the table!

JOXER (*horrified*): Ah, no, ah, no! He wouldn't be afther doin' that, now.

BOYLE: An' who done it then? Juno left a bottle o' stout here, an' it's gone—it didn't walk, did it?

JOXER: Oh, that's shockin'; ah, man's inhumanity to man makes countless thousands mourn!

MRS. MADIGAN (*appearing at the door*): I hope I'm not disturbin' you in any discussion on your forthcomin' legacy—if I may use the word—an' that you'll let me have a barny for a minute or two with you, Mr. Boyle.

BOYLE (*uneasily*): To be sure, Mrs. Madigan—an oul' friend's always welcome.

JOXER: Come in the evenin', come in th' mornin'; come when you're assed, or come without warnin', Mrs. Madigan.

BOYLE: Sit down, Mrs. Madigan.

MRS. MADIGAN (*ominously*): Th' few words I have to say can be said standin'. Puttin' aside all formularies, I suppose you remember me lendin' you some time ago three poun's that I raised on blankets an' furniture in me uncle's?

BOYLE: I remember it well. I have it recorded in me book—three poun's five shillin's from Maisie Madigan, raised on articles pawned;

an', item: fourpence, given to make up the price of a pint, on th' principle that no bird ever flew on wan wing; all to be repaid at par, when the ship comes home.

MRS. MADIGAN: Well, ever since I shoved in the blankets I've been perishing with th' cowld, an' I've decided, if I'll be too hot in th' nex' world aself, I'm not goin' to be too cowld in this wan; an' consequently, I want me three poun's, if you please.

BOYLE: This is a very sudden demand, Mrs. Madigan, an' can't be met; but I'm willin' to give you a receipt in full, in full.

MRS. MADIGAN: Come on, out with th' money, an' don't be jackactin'.

BOYLE: You can't get blood out of a turnip, can you?

MRS. MADIGAN (*rushing over and shaking him*): Gimme me money, y'oul' reprobate, or I'll shake the worth of it out of you!

BOYLE: Ey, houl' on, there; houl' on, there! You'll wait for your money now, me lassie!

MRS. MADIGAN (*looking around the room and seeing the gramophone*): I'll wait for it, will I? Well, I'll not wait long; if I can't get th' cash, I'll get th' worth of it. (*She catches up the gramophone.*)

BOYLE: Ey, ey, there, wher'r you goin' with that?

MRS. MADIGAN: I'm goin' to th' pawn to get me three quid five shillin's; I'll bring you th' ticket, an' then you can do what you like, me bucko.

BOYLE: You can't touch that, you can't touch that! It's not my property, an' it's not ped for yet!

MRS. MADIGAN: So much th' betther. It'll be an ayse to me conscience, for I'm takin' what doesn't belong to you. You're not goin' to be swankin' it like a paycock with Maisie Madigan's money—I'll pull some o' the gorgeous feathers out o' your tail! (*She goes off with the gramophone.*)

BOYLE: What's th' world comin' to at all? I ass you, Joxer Daly, is there any morality left anywhere?

JOXER: I wouldn't ha' believed it, only I seen it with me own two eyes. I didn't think Maisie Madigan was that sort of a woman; she has either a sup taken, or she's heard somethin'.

BOYLE: Heard somethin'—about what, if it's not any harm to ass you?

JOXER: She must ha' heard some rumour or other that you weren't goin' to get th' money.

BOYLE: Who says I'm not goin' to get th' money?

JOXER: Sure, I know—I was only sayin'.

BOYLE: Only sayin' what?

JOXER: Nothin'.

BOYLE: You were goin' to say somethin', don't be a twisther.

JOXER (*angrily*): Who's a twisther?

BOYLE: Why don't you speak your mind, then?

JOXER: You never twisted yourself—no, you wouldn't know how!

BOYLE: Did you ever know me to twist; did you ever know me to twist?

JOXER (*fiercely*): Did you ever do anythin' else! Sure, you can't believe a word that comes out o' your mouth.

BOYLE: Here, get out, ower o' this; I always knew you were a prognosticator an' a procrastinator!

JOXER (*going out as* JOHNNY *comes in*): The anchor's weighed, farewell, re . . . mem . . . ber . . . me. Jacky Boyle, Esquire, infernal rogue an' damned liar!

JOHNNY: Joxer an' you at it agen?—when are you goin' to have a little respect for yourself, an' not be always makin' a show of us all?

BOYLE: Are you goin' to lecture me now?

JOHNNY: Is mother back from the doctor yet, with Mary?

(MRS. BOYLE *enters; it is apparent from the serious look on her face that something has happened. She takes off her hat and coat without a word and puts them by. She then sits down near the fire, and there is a few moments' pause.*)

BOYLE: Well, what did the doctor say about Mary?

MRS. BOYLE (*in an earnest manner and with suppressed agitation*): Sit down here, Jack; I've something to say to you . . . about Mary.

BOYLE (*awed by her manner*): About . . . Mary?

MRS. BOYLE: Close that door there and sit down here.

BOYLE (*closing the door*): More throuble in our native land, is it? (*He sits down*) Well, what is it?

MRS. BOYLE: It's about Mary.

BOYLE: Well, what about Mary—there's nothin' wrong with her, is there?

MRS. BOYLE: I'm sorry to say there's a gradle wrong with her.

BOYLE: A gradle wrong with her! (*Peevishly*) First Johnny an' now Mary; is the whole house goin' to become an hospital! It's not consumption, is it?

MRS. BOYLE: No . . . it's not consumption . . . it's worse.

JOHNNY: Worse! Well, we'll have to get her into some place ower this, there's no one here to mind her.

MRS. BOYLE: We'll all have to mind her now. You might as well know now, Johnny, as another time. (*To* BOYLE) D'ye know what the doctor said to me about her, Jack?

BOYLE: How ud I know—I wasn't there, was I?

MRS. BOYLE: He told me to get her married at wanst.

BOYLE: Married at wanst! An' why did he say the like o' that?

MRS. BOYLE: Because Mary's goin' to have a baby in a short time.

BOYLE: Goin' to have a baby!—my God, what'll Bentham say when he hears that?

MRS. BOYLE: Are you blind, man, that you can't see that it was Bentham that has done this wrong to her?

BOYLE (*passionately*): Then he'll marry her, he'll have to marry her!

MRS. BOYLE: You know he's gone to England, an' God knows where he is now.

BOYLE: I'll folley him, I'll folley him, an' bring him back, an' make him do her justice. The scoundrel, I might ha' known what he was, with his yogees an' his prawna!

MRS. BOYLE: We'll have to keep it quiet till we see what we can do.

BOYLE: Oh, isn't this a nice thing to come on top o' me, an' the state I'm in! A pretty show I'll be to Joxer an' to that oul' wan, Madigan! Amn't I afther goin' through enough without havin' to go through this!

MRS. BOYLE: What you an' I'll have to go through'll be nothin' to what poor Mary'll have to go through; for you an' me is middlin' old, an' most of our years is spent; but Mary'll have maybe forty years to face an' handle, an' every wan of them'll be tainted with a bitther memory.

BOYLE: Where is she? Where is she till I tell her off? I'm tellin' you when I'm done with her she'll be a sorry girl!

MRS. BOYLE: I left her in me sisther's till I came to speak to you. You'll say nothin' to her, Jack; ever since she left school she's earned her livin', an' your fatherly care never throubled the poor girl.

BOYLE: Gwan, take her part agen her father! But I'll let you see whether I'll say nothin' to her or no! Her an' her readin'! That's more o' th' blasted nonsense that has the house fallin' down on top of us! What did th' likes of her, born in a tenement house, want with readin'? Her readin's afther bringin' her to a nice pass—oh, it's madnin', madnin', madnin'!

MRS. BOYLE: When she comes back say nothin' to her, Jack, or she'll leave this place

BOYLE: Leave this place! Ay, she'll leave this place, an' quick too!

MBS. BOYLE: If Mary goes, I'll go with her.

BOYLE: Well, go with her! Well, go, th' pair o' yous! I lived before I seen yous, an' I can live when yous are gone. Isn't this a nice thing to come rollin' in on top o' me afther all your prayin' to St. Anthony an' The Little Flower. An' she's a child o' Mary, too—I wonder what'll the nuns think of her now? An' it'll be bellows'd all over th' disthrict before you could say Jack Robinson; an' whenever I'm seen they'll whisper, "That's th' father of Mary Boyle that had th' kid be th' swank she used to go with; d'ye know, d'ye know?" To be sure they'll know—more about it than I will meself!

JOHNNY: She should be dhriven out o' th' house she's brought disgrace on!

MRS. BOYLE: Hush, you, Johnny. We needn't let it be bellows'd all over the place; all we've got to do is to leave this place quietly an' go somewhere where we're not known, an' nobody'll be the wiser.

BOYLE: You're talkin' like a two-year-oul', woman. Where'll we get a place ou' o' this?—places aren't that easily got.

MRS. BOYLE: But, Jack, when we get the money . . .

BOYLE: Money—what money?

MRS. BOYLE: Why, oul' Ellison's money, of course.

BOYLE: There's no money comin' from oul' Ellison, or any one else. Since you heard of wan throuble, you might as well hear of another. There's no money comin' to us at all—the Will's a wash out!

MRS. BOYLE: What are you sayin', man—no money?

JOHNNY: How could it be a wash out?

BOYLE: The boyo that's afther doin' it to Mary done it to me as well. The thick made out the Will wrong; he said in th' Will, only first cousin an' second cousin, instead of mentionin' our names, an' now any one that thinks he's a first cousin or second cousin t'oul' Ellison can claim the money as well as me, an' they're springin' up in hundreds, an' comin' from America an' Australia, thinkin' to get their whack out of it, while all the time the lawyers is gobblin' it up, till there's not as much as ud buy a stockin' for your lovely daughter's baby!

MRS. BOYLE: I don't believe it, I don't believe it, I don't believe it!

JOHNNY: Why did you nothin' about this before?

MRS. BOYLE: You're not serious, Jack; you're not serious!

BOYLE: I'm tellin' you the scholar, Bentham, made a banjax o' th' Will; instead o' sayin', "th' rest o' me property to be divided between me first cousin, Jack Boyle, an' me second cousin, Mick Finnegan, o' Santhry," he writ down only, "me first an' second cousins," an' the world an' his wife are afther th' property now.

MRS. BOYLE: Now, I know why Bentham left poor Mary in th' lurch; I can see it all now—oh, is there not even a middlin' honest man left in th' world?

JOHNNY (*to* BOYLE): An' you let us run into debt, an' you borreyed money from everybody to fill yourself with beer! An' now, you

tell us the whole thing's a wash out! Oh, if it's thrue, I'm done with you, for you're worse than me sisther Mary!

BOYLE: You hole your tongue, d'ye hear? I'll not take any lip from you. Go an' get Bentham if you want satisfaction for all that's afther happenin' us.

JOHNNY: I won't hole me tongue, I won't hole me tongue! I'll tell you what I think of you, father an' all as you are . . . you . . .

MRS. BOYLE: Johnny, Johnny, Johnny, for God's sake, be quiet!

JOHNNY: I'll not be quiet, I'll not be quiet; he's a nice father, isn't he? Is it any wondher Mary went asthray, when . . .

MRS. BOYLE: Johnny, Johnny, for my sake be quiet—for your mother's sake!

BOYLE: I'm goin' out now to have a few dhrinks with th' last few makes I have, an' tell that lassie o' yours not to be here when I come back; for if I lay me eyes on her, I'll lay me han's on her, an' if I lay me han's on her, I won't be accountable for me actions!

JOHNNY: Take care somebody doesn't lay his han's on you—y'oul' . . .

MRS. BOYLE: Johnny, Johnny!

BOYLE (*at door, about to go out*): Oh, a nice son, an' a nicer daughter, I have. (*Calling loudly upstairs*) Joxer, Joxer, are you there?

JOXER (*from a distance*): I'm here, More . . . ee . . . aar . . . i . . . tee!

BOYLE: I'm goin' down to Foley's—are you comin'?

JOXER: Come with you? With that sweet call me heart is stirred; I'm only waiting for the word, an' I'll be with you, like a bird!

(BOYLE *and* JOXER *pass the door going out.*)

JOHNNY (*throwing himself on the bed*): I've a nice sisther, an' a nice father, there's no bettin' on it. I wish to God a bullet or a bomb had whipped me ou' o' this long ago! Not one o' yous, not one o' yous, have any thought for me!

MRS. BOYLE (*with passionate remonstrance*): If you don't whisht, Johnny, you'll drive me mad. Who has kep' th' home together for the past few years—only me. An' who'll have to bear th' biggest

part o' this throuble but me—but whinin' an' whingin' isn't going to do any good.

JOHNNY: You're to blame yourself for a gradle of it—givin' him his own way in everything, an' never assin' to check him, no matther what he done. Why didn't you look afther th' money? why . . .

(*There is a knock at the door;* MRS. BOYLE *opens it;* JOHNNY *rises on his elbow to look and listen; two men enter.*)

FIRST MAN: We've been sent up be th' Manager of the Hibernian Furnishing Co., Mrs. Boyle, to take back the furniture that was got a while ago.

MRS. BOYLE: Yous'll touch nothin' here—how do I know who yous are?

FIRST MAN (*showing a paper*): There's the ordher, ma'am. (*Reading*) A chest o' drawers, a table, wan easy an' two ordinary chairs; wan mirror; wan chestherfield divan, an' a wardrobe an' two vases. (*To his comrade*) Come on, Bill, it's afther knockin' off time already.

JOHNNY: For God's sake, mother, run down to Foley's an' bring father back, or we'll be left without a stick.

(*The men carry out the table.*)

MRS. BOYLE: What good would it be? You heard what he said before he went out.

JOHNNY: Can't you thry? He ought to be here, an' the like of this goin' on.

(MRS. BOYLE *puts a shawl around her, as* MARY *enters.*)

MARY: What's up, mother? I met men carryin' away the table, an' everybody's talking about us not gettin' the money after all.

MRS. BOYLE: Everythin's gone wrong, Mary, everythin'. We're not gettin' a penny out o' the Will, not a penny—I'll tell you all when I come back; I'm goin' for your father. (*She runs out.*)

JOHNNY (*to* MARY, *who has sat down by the fire*): It's a wondher you're not ashamed to show your face here, afther what has happened.

(JERRY *enters slowly; there is a look of earnest hope on his face. He looks at* MARY *for a few moments.*)

JERRY (*softly*): Mary!

(MARY *does not answer.*)

JERRY: Mary, I want to speak to you for a few moments, may I?

(MARY *remains silent;* JOHNNY *goes slowly into room on left.*)

JERRY: Your mother has told me everything, Mary, and I have come to you. . . . I have come to tell you, Mary, that my love for you is greater and deeper than ever. . . .

MARY (*with a sob*): Oh, Jerry, Jerry, say no more; all that is over now; anything like that is impossible now!

JERRY: Impossible? Why do you talk like that, Mary?

MARY: After all that has happened.

JERRY: What does it matter what has happened? We are young enough to be able to forget all those things. (*He catches her hand*) Mary, Mary, I am pleading for your love. With Labour, Mary, humanity is above everything; we are the Leaders in the fight for a new life. I want to forget Bentham, I want to forget that you left me—even for a while.

MARY: Oh, Jerry, Jerry, you haven't the bitter word of scorn for me after all.

JERRY (*passionately*): Scorn! I love you, love you, Mary!

MARY (*rising, and looking him in the eyes*): Even though . . .

JERRY: Even though you threw me over for another man; even though you gave me many a bitter word!

MARY: Yes, yes, I know; but you love me, even though . . . even though . . . I'm . . . goin' . . . goin' . . . (*He looks at her questioningly, and fear gathers in his eyes*) Ah, I was thinkin' so. . . . You don't know everything!

JERRY (*poignantly*): Surely to God, Mary, you don't mean that . . . that . . . that . . .

MARY: Now you know all, Jerry; now you know all!

JERRY: My God, Mary, have you fallen as low as that?

MARY: Yes, Jerry, as you say, I have fallen as low as that.

JERRY: I didn't mean it that way, Mary . . . it came on me so sudden, that I didn't mind what I was sayin'. . . . I never expected this—your mother never told me. . . . I'm sorry . . . God knows, I'm sorry for you, Mary.

MARY: Let us say no more, Jerry; I don't blame you for thinkin' it's terrible. . . . I suppose it is. . . . Everybody'll think the same. . . . It's only as I expected—your humanity is just as narrow as the humanity of the others.

JERRY: I'm sorry, all the same. . . . I shouldn't have troubled you. . . . I wouldn't if I'd known . . . if I can do anything for you . . . Mary . . . I will. (*He turns to go, and halts at the door.*)

MARY: Do you remember, Jerry, the verses you read when you gave the lecture in the Socialist Rooms some time ago, on Humanity's Strife with Nature?

JERRY: The verses—no; I don't remember them.

MARY: I do. They're runnin' in me head now—

An' we felt the power that fashion'd
All the lovely things we saw,
That created all the murmur
Of an everlasting law,
Was a hand of force an' beauty,
With an eagle's tearin' claw.

Then we saw our globe of beauty
Was an ugly thing as well,
A hymn divine whose chorus
Was an agonizin' yell;
Like the story of a demon,
That an angel had to tell.

Like a glowin' picture by a
Hand unsteady, brought to ruin;
Like her craters, if their deadness
Could give life unto the moon;
Like the agonizing horror
Of a violin out of tune.

(*There is a pause, and* DEVINE *goes slowly out.*)

JOHNNY (*returning*): Is he gone?

MARY: Yes.

(*The two men re-enter.*)

FIRST MAN: We can't wait any longer for t'oul' fella—sorry, Miss, but we have to live as well as th' nex' man.

(*They carry out some things.*)

JOHNNY: Oh, isn't this terrible! . . . I suppose you told him everything . . . couldn't you have waited for a few days . . . he'd have stopped th' takin' of the things, if you'd kep' your mouth shut. Are you burnin' to tell every one of the shame you've brought on us?

MARY (*snatching up her hat and coat*): Oh, this is unbearable! (*She rushes out.*)

FIRST MAN (*re-entering*): We'll take the chest o' drawers next— it's the heaviest.

(*The votive light flickers for a moment, and goes out.*)

JOHNNY (*in a cry of fear*): Mother o' God, the light's afther goin' out!

FIRST MAN: You put the win' up me the way you bawled that time. The oil's all gone, that's all.

JOHNNY (*with an agonizing cry*): Mother o' God, there's a shot I'm afther getting'!

FIRST MAN: What's wrong with you, man? Is it a fit you're takin'?

JOHNNY: I'm afther feelin' a pain in me breast, like the tearin' by of a bullet!

FIRST MAN: He's goin' mad—it's a wondher they'd leave a chap like that here be himself.

(*Two* IRREGULARS *enter swiftly; they carry revolvers; one goes over* TO JOHNNY; *the other covers the two furniture men.*)

FIRST IRREGULAR (*to the men, quietly and incisively*): Who are you —what are yous doin' here—quick!

FIRST MAN: Removin' furniture that's not paid for.

IRREGULAR: Get over to the other end of the room an' turn your faces to the wall—quick.

(*The two men turn their faces to the wall, with their hands up.*)

SECOND IRREGULAR (*to* JOHNNY): Come on, Sean Boyle, you're wanted; some of us have a word to say to you.

JOHNNY: I'm sick, I can't—what do you want with me?

SECOND IRREGULAR: Come on, come on; we've a distance to go, an' haven't much time—come on.

JOHNNY: I'm an oul' comrade—yous wouldn't shoot an oul' comrade.

SECOND IRREGULAR: Poor Tancred was an oul' comrade o' yours, but you didn't think o' that when you gave him away to the gang that sent him to his grave. But we've no time to waste; come on—here, Dermot, ketch his arm. (*To* JOHNNY) Have you your beads?

JOHNNY: Me beads! Why do you ass me that, why do you ass me that?

SECOND IRREGULAR: Go on, go on, march!

JOHNNY: Are yous goin' to do in a comrade—look at me arm, I lost it for Ireland.

SECOND IRREGULAR: Commandant Tancred lost his life for Ireland.

JOHNNY: Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on me! Mother o' God, pray for me—be with me now in the agonies o' death! . . . Hail, Mary, full o' grace . . . the Lord is . . . with Thee.

(*They drag out* JOHNNY BOYLE, *and the curtain falls. When it rises again the most of the furniture is gone.* MARY *and* MRS. BOYLE, *one on each side, are sitting in a darkened room, by the fire; it is an hour later.*)

MRS. BOYLE: I'll not wait much longer . . . what did they bring him away in the mothor for? Nugent says he thinks they had guns . . . is me throubles never goin' to be over? . . . If anything ud happen to poor Johnny, I think I'd lost me mind . . . I'll go to the Police Station, surely they ought to be able to do somethin'.

(*Below is heard the sound of voices.*)

MRS. BOYLE: Whisht, is that something? Maybe, it's your father, though when I left him in Foley's he was hardly able to lift his head. Whisht!

(*A knock at the door, and the voice of* MRS. MADIGAN, *speaking very softly:*)

Mrs. Boyle, Mrs. Boyle. (MRS. BOYLE *opens the door.*)

MRS. MADIGAN: Oh, Mrs. Boyle, God an' His Blessed Mother be with you this night!

MRS. BOYLE (*calmly*): What is it, Mrs. Madigan? It's Johnny—something about Johnny.

MRS. MADIGAN: God send it's not. God send it's not Johnny!

MRS. BOYLE: Don't keep me waitin', Mrs. Madigan; I've gone through so much lately that I feel able for anything.

MRS. MADIGAN: Two polismen below wantin' you.

MRS. BOYLE: Wantin' me; an' why do they want me?

MRS. MADIGAN: Some poor fella's been found, an' they think it's, it's . . .

MRS. BOYLE: Johnny, Johnny!

MARY (*with her arms round her mother*): Oh, mother, mother, me poor, darlin' mother.

MRS. BOYLE: Hush, hush, darlin'; you'll shortly have your own throuble to bear. (*To* MRS. MADIGAN) An' why do the polis think it's Johnny, Mrs. Madigan?

MRS. MADIGAN: Because one o' the doctors knew him when he was attendin' with his poor arm.

MRS. BOYLE: Oh, it's thrue; then; it's Johnny, it's me son, me own son!

MARY: Oh, it's thrue, it's thrue what Jerry Devine says—there isn't a God, there isn't a God; if there was He wouldn't let these things happen!

MRS. BOYLE: Mary, Mary, you mustn't say them things. We'll want all the help we can get from God an' His Blessed Mother now! These things have nothin' to do with the Will o' God. Ah, what can God do agen the stupidity o' men!

MRS. MADIGAN: The polis want you to go with them to the hospital to see the poor body—they're waitin' below.

MRS. BOYLE: We'll go. Come, Mary, an' we'll never come back here agen. Let your father furrage for himself now; I've done all I could an' it was all no use—he'll be hopeless till the end of his days. I've got a little room in me sisther's where we'll stop till your throuble is over, an' then we'll work together for the sake of the baby.

MARY: My poor little child that'll have no father!

MRS. BOYLE: It'll have what's far betther—it'll have two mothers.

(*A rough voice shouting from below:*)

Are yous goin' to keep us waitin' for yous all night?

MRS. MADIGAN (*going to the door, and shouting down*): Take your hour, there, take your hour! If yous are in such a hurry, skip off, then, for nobody wants you here—if they did yous wouldn't be found. For you're the same as yous were undher the British Government—never where yous are wanted! As far as I can see, the Polis as Polis, in this city, is Null an' Void!

MRS. BOYLE: We'll go, Mary, we'll go; you to see your poor dead brother, an' me to see me poor dead son!

MARY: I dhread it, mother, I dhread it!

MRS. BOYLE: I forgot, Mary, I forgot; your poor oul' selfish mother was only thinkin' of herself. No, no, you mustn't come—it wouldn't be good for you. You go on to me sisther's an I'll face th' ordeal meself. Maybe I didn't feel sorry enough for Mrs. Tancred when her poor son was found as Johnny's been found now—because he was a Die-hard! Ah, why didn't I remember that then he wasn't a Die-hard or a Stater, but only a poor dead son! It's well I remember all that she said—an' it's my turn to say it now: What was the pain I suffered, Johnny, bringin' you into the world to carry you to your cradle to the pains I'll suffer carryin' you out o' the world to bring you to your grave! Mother o' God, Mother o' God, have pity on us all! Blessed Virgin, where were you when me darlin' son was riddled with bullets, when me darlin' son was riddled with bullets? Sacred Heart o' Jesus, take away our hearts o' stone, and give us hearts o' flesh! Take away this murdherin' hate, an' give us Thine own eternal love!

(*They all go slowly out.*)

(*There is a pause; then a sound of shuffling steps on the stairs outside. The door opens and* BOYLE *and* JOXER, *both of them very drunk, enter.*)

BOYLE: I'm able to go no farther. . . . Two polis, ey . . . what were they doin' here, I wondher? . . . Up to no good, anyhow . . . an' Juno an' that lovely daughter o' mine with them. (*Taking a sixpence from his pocket and looking at it*) Wan single, solithary tanner left out of all I borreyed. . . (*He lets it fall*) The last o' the Mohicans. . . . The blinds is down, Joxer, the blinds is down!

JOXER (*walking unsteadily across the room, and anchoring at the bed*): Put all . . . your throubles . . . in your oul' kit bag . . . an' smile . . . smile . . . smile!

BOYLE: The counthry'll have to steady itself . . . it's goin' . . . to hell. . . . Where'r all . . . the chairs . . . gone to . . . steady itself, Joxer. . . . Chairs'll . . . have to . . . steady themselves. . . . No matther . . . what any one may . . . say . . . Irelan's sober . . . is Irelan' . . . free.

JOXER (*stretching himself on the bed*): Chains . . . an' . . . slaveree . . . that's a darlin' motto . . . a daaarlin' . . . motto!

BOYLE: If th' worst comes . . . to th' worse . . . I can join a . . . flyin' . . . column. . . . I done . . . me bit . . . in Easther Week . . . had no business . . . to . . . be . . . there . . . but Captain Boyle's Captain Boyle!

JOXER: Breathes there a man with soul . . . so . . . de . . . ad . . . this . . . me . . . o . . . wn, me nat . . . ive l . . . an'!

BOYLE (*subsiding into a sitting posture on the floor*): Commandant Kelly died . . . in them . . . arms . . . Joxer. . . . Tell me Volunteer Butties . . . says he . . . that . . . I died for . . . Irelan'!

JOXER: D'jever rade Willie . . . Reilly . . . an' his . . . own . . . Colleen . . . Bawn? It's a darlin' story, a daarlin' story!

BOYLE: I'm telling you . . . Joxer . . . th' whole worl's . . . in a terr . . . ible state o' . . . chassis!

(*The Curtain Falls.*)

Juno and the Paycock offers rewarding material for studying an audience's ambivalent attitude as well as the complexity of tone and the development of character found in great tragedy. The tonal shifts are rapid and forceful, with the tragic emerging gradually in the devastating third act, in which the comedy is almost obliterated by a series of catastrophes. The characters in *Juno and the Paycock* do not undergo fundamental changes as does Christy in *The Playboy of the Western World;* it is rather our attitudes toward the characters that are altered and qualified as O'Casey brilliantly reveals their full, complex personalities. Although there is little plot here, other than that involving the false expectation of an inheritance, the author achieves dramatic unity by skillfully integrating tone and characterization.

The significance of the title is apparent when one recalls that the goddess Juno, queen of the heavens, was considered the protectoress of women and marriage. Special attention is called to the name *Juno* (p. 574), and Bentham says that it reminds him of Homer's gods and heroes. And Juno Boyle, in her heroic attempts to hold her family together, does attain great stature. Boyle, on the other hand, is appropriately referred to as a proud, strutting peacock. The title, however, also has ironic significance in that the classical poets considered the peacock *sacred* to Juno.

The curtain rises on a domestic scene in which there is an undercurrent of conflicting tensions. Juno appears on the one hand to be a kindly woman, bringing a glass of water to her ailing son, yet she is also a nagging wife, berating her lazy husband and his friend Joxer and attacking Mary for not working. Mary reveals her annoyance at her brother's helplessness and Johnny shows the strained relationship with his father when he says, "I hate assin' him for anythin' . . ." (p. 556).

This hostile atmosphere is soon changed by the entrance of Boyle and Joxer, two shiftless cronies who agree wholeheartedly that "It's a terrible thing to be tied to a woman that's always grousin' " (p. 558). The comedy of the scene is increased by Juno's sudden appearance, which sends Joxer scurrying to the door. In Act One the scenes in which Joxer appears are always comic. His conversation, his abrupt departures via window or door, his refrain of "it's a darlin' . . . a daarlin' — " at times border on farce. Joxer's response when asked to see who is pounding at the street door is typical of him: "An' mebbe get a bullet in the kisser? Ah, none o' them thricks for Joxer! It's betther to be a coward than a corpse!"

(p. 567). Johnny's querulous voice constantly interposes a discordant note into these humorous moments, however. Even the scene about the will is humorous as Boyle, swelling with self-importance, quickly reverses his attitude toward his deceased cousin, and Joxer puts in an outraged appearance. The curtain descends on Boyle's earnest promise that he will be "a new man from this out . . . ." The underlying tension is submerged at the end of the act by a mood of buoyant, joyful enthusiasm and optimistic hope.

The first scene of Act Two, between Boyle and Joxer, varies the comic effects. Boyle is now officious, signing papers, rather superciliously impressing his friend with his importance as "a man o' money" and "masther" of the house. His political opinions have been completely reversed, yet as usual Joxer agrees heartily with all his assertions. Boyle later even tries to impress his family and Bentham with his knowledge of high finance.

The gay mood is first broken by Johnny's momentary hysteria when he thinks that he sees Robbie Tancred kneeling before the statue in his room. Yet even during this rather startling episode there are humorous moments. Each of the Boyles turns to the other, none daring to go into the room beyond to prove that this vision is all Johnny's imagination. The party soon resumes, with drinking, singing, and joking, as Mrs. Madigan and Joxer provide much of the entertainment. Once again Johnny disrupts the festivities by calling in, "Mother, put on the gramophone, for God's sake, an' stop Joxer's bawlin' " (p. 590). Before Boyle can start playing the machine, however, Mrs. Tancred and her friends completely dampen the party spirit. But her piteous and deeply moving speech has only a temporary effect on her listeners, for they return almost immediately to their merrymaking. Sympathy for the poor widow is soon replaced by mere curiosity when the funeral procession passes by; their excitement and desire to "have a betther view" remind one of people watching a parade. In contrast to the gay singing of the party, echoes of a distant hymn and the chanting of "Hail, Mary" establish a tone of moving solemnity. Against this foreboding background, attention shifts significantly to Johnny, who has seemed to be a patriotic, seriously injured soldier, yet who gradually arouses our uneasy suspicions. How?

The structure of the last act is a long series of catastrophes in close succession. The action develops on an ascending scale from minor difficulties, which often have comic overtones yet suggest a foreshadowing of disaster, to overpowering tragedy: Juno learns of Bentham's desertion, Nugent runs off with Boyle's clothes, Mrs. Madigan comes for her money, Juno reveals that Mary is pregnant, Boyle admits that the legacy is nonexistent, men come to remove the

furniture, Jerry walks out on Mary, and Johnny is led out to his doom.

Juno's poignant repetition (p. 615) of Mrs. Tancred's speech gives her personal tragedy its most powerful expression. To create this deeply moving effect, O'Casey has skillfully resorted to a technique called "dramatic illusion," for Juno utters almost verbatim a grief-stricken prayer of about a hundred words which had been spoken two months earlier. Because the audience is emotionally involved, it will not — and indeed should not — be critically aware of the implausibility of this. The emotional impact, consequently, is greatly heightened because the earlier tragedy is vividly recalled by Juno in intensely personal terms. The full significance of Tancred's death — an important structural device — is now established. The death had been first presented, as the play begins, in an objective newspaper account read with almost morbid interest by Mary. Only Johnny feels anything more than remote detachment. When in Act Two Tancred's funeral impinges upon the Boyle's gaiety, its presence becomes immediate, but not personal. ". . . they don't affect us," Boyle says, "an' we needn't give a damn." "In wan way, she deserves all she got . . ." replies Juno (p. 592). Only at the end of the drama, when the two deaths are united, does Juno become acutely conscious of the overwhelming grief and suffering that Mrs. Tancred has endured.

The curtain scene between Joxer and Boyle comes with dramatic shock. In the midst of the tragedy their antics no longer amuse us but rather fill us with an even keener appreciation of Juno's sorrow. Boyle's tag line ". . . th' whole worl's . . . in a terr . . . ible state o' . . . chassis [chaos]!" is not humorous now, but instead is tragically true for the Boyles while ironic for him, because he is still unaware of its full truth.

By the third act it is clear what Joxer is — a fair-weather friend. He quickly joins forces with Nugent when he learns that Boyle will receive no money, even stooping to the theft of the bottle of stout. Yet soon, to see the fun, he returns, a "butty" of Boyle's, eager to condemn Mrs. Madigan for her disloyalty. Essentially he is a shallow person, whose craftiness and egotism prevent him from feeling genuine friendship. He is so good-natured and has such a marvelous sense of humor, however, that we cannot altogether dislike him.

For Boyle, Joxer is a haven in time of stress. When he visualizes himself first as a martyr to a nagging wife and later is utterly unable to cope with the tragedy that strikes him, he seeks solace in trips to Foley's with his friend. He seems unaware of his own laziness; in fact, his attitude toward work is well summed up by

the phrase he repeats in times of marital stress: "It ud be betther for a man to be dead!" (p. 563). A failure as a father and a husband, he is quick to condemn his daughter for her pregnancy, more because of the gossip that will be aroused than because of her immorality. The disgrace of his own drunkenness does not occur to him. Yet we cannot merely condemn Boyle for his boastfulness and inadequacies. During the first two acts we are inclined not to be severe with him, for like Joxer, his happy-go-lucky nature, his sense of humor, and the comic spectacle he often makes of himself establish an attitude of sympathetic amusement. We do, however, share Juno's annoyance when she says despairingly that "He'll be hopeless till the end of his days" (p. 615). Only when we find that he does not have the strength to face tragedy does our attitude become more one of pity, mingled with contempt.

Nor is our final reaction to Johnny a simple one to define. On the one hand, his scorn for Mary and his anger toward his father seem ironic in view of his own perfidy and the dishonor he is to bring on the family. Nevertheless, we sympathize with him too, for he is physically and mentally ill. His nerves and conscience keep him in a perpetual state of fear. His querulous manner is understandable when we discover the dreadful secret that he has lived with, unable to unburden himself by revealing it to anyone. Moreover, he gives the impression of having sacrificed much in performing what he considered his duty to Ireland.

Our attitude toward Mary is complex, for one cannot help pitying her in her scene with Jerry, when for a few moments it appears that he will save her from disgrace. But for her admirable honesty in confessing her relationship with Bentham, she might have been able to marry Jerry. In addition, she has the conviction of her liberal political and economic views, admiring Johnny's fight for a cause and sacrificing her job in protest against the victimization of a fellow employee. She has, nevertheless, like her brother, disgraced herself and her family. In Act One she treats Jerry with undeserved contempt, and at Johnny's death she selfishly avoids having to stand by her mother when Juno most needs comfort and help.

It is ironic that each of the Boyles should be outraged by the conduct of the others when each, with the exception of Juno, is himself an offender. Johnny attacks both Mary and his father, Boyle is furious with Mary and Juno, and Mary quarrels with Johnny. Only Juno is ready to forgive in an effort to keep her family united. It is the height of tragic irony that despite all her efforts the family is shattered, torn by internal frictions as well as external misfortunes. Until she leaves Boyle when she sees that

the family cannot be saved, she is loyal to each, yet each has deeply hurt her. Mary has not confided in her because she "wouldn't understand" (p. 597), Johnny disregards her when she begs him not to quarrel with his father and even blames her for their trouble (p. 609), and Boyle directs all his anger at her when he finds out about Mary's condition.

Only in the last act, however, does Juno assume heroic stature. In Act One our reaction to her is one of guarded sympathy, for she is capable of petty bickering and nagging. Although her speech on page 556 seems to reveal some self-pity, one feels that it may be justified, considering that her husband is a slacker, her daughter out on strike, and her son ill: "Amn't I nicely handicapped with the whole o' yous! I don't know what any o' yous ud do without your ma." In Act Two, in the face of her neighbor's sorrow she cruelly suggests that Mrs. Tancred deserved her tragedy. Later she thoughtlessly urges her husband to start the gramophone just as the cortege is passing the house. In the final act, however, Juno is the only one of the family brave enough to face their terrible heartaches. She never loses faith in her God, even as her world collapses about her: "These things have nothin' to do with the Will o' God. Ah, what can God do agen the stupidity o' men!" (p. 614). Alone she must endure the last ordeal of seeing her son's body, for Mary will not go with her. This is the final irony in her personal tragedy: ". . . your poor oul' selfish mother was only thinkin' of herself . . . . I'll face th' ordeal meself" (p. 615). It is in this concluding scene that she attains tragic nobility and emerges as one of the truly great heroines in modern drama.

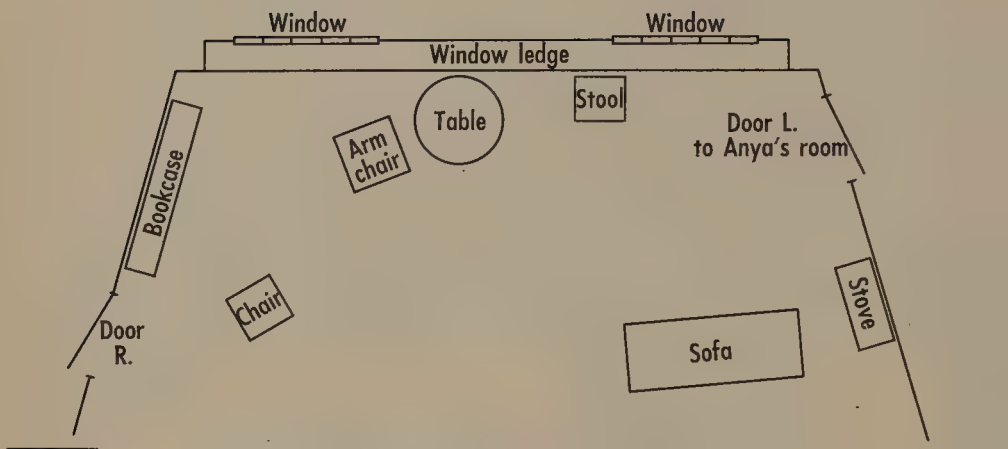
QUESTIONS

1. Up to the time of Bentham's appearance in Act One, what elements in the relationship between Boyle and Joxer produce a comic tone?
2. For what purposes is Jerry used in Act One? What is the tone of his scene with Mary during this act? Where do our sympathies lie in this scene? In their scene in Act Three? Is the subplot of Mary's love affair adequately motivated? Is it successfully integrated into the total dramatic unity?
3. How does O'Casey's handling of entrances and exits in Act One remind you of Synge's?
4. Why would Boyle think *The Wild Duck* "fit only for chiselurs" (p. 567)? Does the fact that *The Wild Duck* received its first performance at the Abbey Theatre in 1923 give another dimension to O'Casey's satirical intent here?

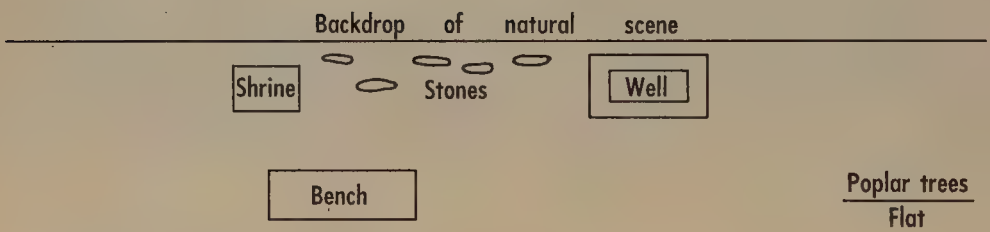
5. How does the light before the Virgin's picture contribute to the theatrical effectiveness of the play?
6. A dramatist usually tries to make the final moments of an act particularly memorable in some dramatically exciting way. In general, what is the purpose of this emphasis? How does O'Casey make the curtain scene of Act One theatrically successful? Contrast the tone of the curtain scene of this act with that of Act Two and Act Three, Scene One. How do these contrasts emphasize the developing tonality of the play? What is the tone of the final scene in Act Three? Had we seen Boyle and Joxer drunk much earlier in the play, what would our attitude probably have been then? How can you account for the change in our final attitude toward them?
7. O'Casey skillfully uses singing to create many dramatically effective moments. Discuss the function of each of the following songs: (a) "Sweet Spirit, hear me prayer!" (p. 557); (b) "Oh, me darlin' Juno" (p. 576); (c) "If I were a blackbird" (p. 589); (d) "To Jesus' Heart all burning" (p. 594); (e) "Put all your throubles in your oul' kit bag" (p. 616).
8. What kind of person is Mrs. Madigan? For what dramatic purposes is she used?
9. Joxer is a gentleman with considerable literary pretensions. How many quotations, or misquotations, from poems and songs can you recognize embedded in his speeches?
10. Excluding the topical allusions to the Irish struggle for political independence, how does O'Casey create the atmosphere of a country torn apart by dissension?
11. Both Mary Boyle and Anna Christie endure similar scenes confessing their pasts. What is the dramatic contribution of each scene to its play? Why should they turn out differently?
12. What different effects are attained from the gramophones in *The Glass Menagerie* and *Juno*?
13. *Anna Christie, The Playboy of the Western World,* and *Juno* are all in dialect. In which would you consider the problems of dialogue most competently handled? Why? Read aloud from each play before reaching any conclusions.
14. It has been argued that the fundamental weakness in *Juno* is its incomplete synthesis of the comic and the tragic. Defend or refute this thesis, using specific illustrations to support your position.
15. Drinking or drunkenness played a role of considerable importance in *Sheba, Anna Christie, Playboy, The Wild Duck, The Glass Menagerie,* and *Juno.* What theatrical effects can a dramatist usually rely on in such scenes? Do they seem to be overdone in any of the plays? What different attitudes are taken toward drinking in these plays? In each case does the drinking seem to be an essential part of the drama, or is it included principally as a piece of "good theater"? In what plays is drunkenness of thematic, as well as tonal, significance? Does it suggest a pattern of ideas and attitudes toward modern life held in common by dramatists from Ibsen to Inge?

ANTON CHEKHOV

THE CHERRY ORCHARD



THE CHERRY ORCHARD • ACTS I AND IV



THE CHERRY ORCHARD • ACT II

ANTON CHEKHOV

ANTON CHEKHOV was born in the old Black Sea port of Taganrog on January 17, 1860. His unhappy boyhood was spent helping his large poverty-stricken family. After graduating from high school at Taganrog, he entered the University of Moscow as a medical student; at the same time, in order to support himself, he wrote a large number of short stories and sketches of Russian life. In 1884 he received his degree as doctor of medicine, although by then he was writing professionally. With the publication of his first collection of short stories in 1887, his talent was immediately recognized.

Chekhov's interest in the drama was aroused at an early age, and he wrote and produced plays (none of which was a success) for at least ten years before the Moscow Art Theater was established. In fact, at the time of his death he was better known as the author of several hundred short stories and sketches than as a playwright. His first minor success was *Ivanov,* produced at Korsh's Theater in Moscow in November 1887.

Seriously ill of tuberculosis, Chekhov retired in 1890 to the Crimea, where he spent most of his remaining years, making frequent trips to Moscow to superintend the production at the Moscow Art Theater of his four important plays. Even though in bad health himself, he continued his work as a country doctor, helping the poor without remuneration and risking his own life to fight the cholera epidemic of 1892. At the first performance of *The Cherry Orchard,* his last play, Chekhov was feted as one of Russia's greatest dramatists, primarily because of his skill in recreating the atmosphere of the Russia of his day. Only a few months afterward Chekhov died in a little German village in the Black Forest, where he had gone in a futile attempt to recover his health.

Chekhov was by temperament a twentieth-century figure. Perhaps his own disease, which prematurely cut short his life, and his career as a doctor helped to give him a deep sympathy with a generation of Russians living in a disintegrating world. He perceived acutely the cultural and social dilemma of a country with a demoralized intelligentsia and an ignorant, poverty-stricken, and despairing

peasantry – a country that was soon to be torn apart by a political revolution which was violently to transform its character.

PRINCIPAL WORKS

Plays

Ivanov (1887)
The Bear (1888)
The Swan Song (1889)
The Proposal (1889)
The Wood Demon (1889)
The Sea Gull (1896)
Uncle Vanya (1899)
The Three Sisters (1901)
The Cherry Orchard (1904)

Novels and Short Story Collections

Humorous Folk (1887)
Twilight, and Other Stories (1887)
Morose Folk (1890)
Variegated Tales (1894)
Old Wives of Russia (1894)
The Duel (1895)
The Chestnut Tree (1895)
Ward Number Six (1897)

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GLOSSARY

"good-for-nothing." Firs' habitual phrase, translated thus from the original Russian, is literally "half-chopped," a word brought into common usage by Chekhov in this play. Our colloquialism "half-baked" is perhaps its nearest equivalent.

"guter Mensch, aber schlechter Musikant." Charlotta calls Pishtchik "a better man, but a worse musician."

kopeck. A copper coin, one hundredth of a ruble, the equivalent of about half a cent in Chekhov's time.

kvass or *quass.* Russian beer made from malt, barley, and rye.

Lezginka. A lively Caucasian dance in two-four time.

patchouli. A mint from which a strong perfume is derived. Lopahin apparently drenches himself in the equivalent of after-shave lotion.

rouble or *ruble.* A Russian silver coin, equal to 100 kopecks, and then worth about fifty cents.

A NOTE ON *THE CHERRY ORCHARD*

The Cherry Orchard is a play which takes place around the turn of the century and deals with the disintegration of the Russian aristocracy following the breakup of the Russian feudal system in 1861. A comparable period in our own history would be the days of the Reconstruction in the South. The cleavage between the old and the new order can be seen in the social positions of all the characters.

CHARACTERS

MADAME RANEVSKY (LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA) (*the owner of the Cherry Orchard*).
ANYA (*her daughter, aged* 17).
VARYA (*her adopted daughter, aged* 24).
GAEV (LEONID ANDREYEVITCH) (*brother of Madame Ranevsky*).
LOPAHIN (YERMOLAY ALEXEYEVITCH) (*a Merchant*).
TROFIMOV (PYOTR SERGEYEVITCH) (*a Student*).
SEMYÓNOV-PISHTCHIK (*a Landowner*).
CHARLOTTA IVANOVNA (*a Governess*).
EPIHODOV (SEMYON PANTALEYEVITCH) (*a Clerk*).
DUNYASHA (*a Maid*).
FIRS (*an old Valet, aged* 87).
YASHA (*a young Valet*).
A VAGRANT.
THE STATION MASTER.
A POST-OFFICE CLERK.
VISITORS, SERVANTS.

The action takes place on the estate of
MADAME RANEVSKY.

Translated by

CONSTANCE GARNETT

The Cherry Orchard was first performed at Moscow on January 17, 1904.

Act One

A room, which has always been called the nursery. One of the doors leads into ANYA'S *room. Dawn, sun rises during the scene. May, the cherry trees in flower, but it is cold in the garden with the frost of early morning. Windows closed.*

Enter DUNYASHA *with a candle and* LOPAHIN *with a book in his hand.*

LOPAHIN: The train's in, thank God. What time is it?

DUNYASHA: Nearly two o'clock (*puts out the candle*). It's daylight already.

LOPAHIN: The train's late! Two hours, at least (*yawns and stretches*). I'm a pretty one; what a fool I've been. Came here on purpose to meet them at the station and dropped asleep. . . . Dozed off as I sat in the chair. It's annoying. . . . You might have waked me.

DUNYASHA: I thought you had gone (*listens*). There, I do believe they're coming!

LOPAHIN (*listens*): No, what with the luggage and one thing and another (*a pause*). Lyubov Andreyevna has been abroad five years; I don't know what she is like now. . . . She's a splendid woman. A good-natured, kind-hearted woman. I remember when I was a lad of fifteen, my poor father—he used to keep a little shop here in the village in those days—gave me a punch in the face with his fist and made my nose bleed. We were in the yard here, I forget what we'd come about—he had had a drop. Lyubov Andreyevna—I can see her now—she was a slim young girl then—took me to wash my face, and then brought me into this very room, into the nursery. "Don't cry, little peasant," says she, "it will be well in time for your wedding day" . . . (*a pause*). Little peasant. . . . My father was a peasant, it's true, but here am I in a white waistcoat and brown shoes, like a pig in a bun shop. Yes, I'm a rich man, but for all my money, come to think, a peasant I was, and a peasant I am (*turns*

over the pages of the book). I've been reading this book and I can't make head or tail of it. I fell asleep over it (*a pause*).

DUNYASHA: The dogs have been awake all night, they feel that the mistress is coming.

LOPAHIN: Why, what's the matter with you, Dunyasha?

DUNYASHA: My hands are all of a tremble. I feel as though I should faint.

LOPAHIN: You're a spoilt soft creature, Dunyasha. And dressed like a lady too, and your hair done up. That's not the thing. One must know one's place.

(*Enter* EPIHODOV *with a nosegay; he wears a pea-jacket and highly polished creaking topboots; he drops the nosegay as he comes in.*)

EPIHODOV (*picking up the nosegay*): Here! the gardener's sent this, says you're to put it in the dining-room (*gives* DUNYASHA *the nosegay*).

LOPAHIN: And bring me some kvass.

DUNYASHA: I will (*goes out*).

EPIHODOV: It's chilly this morning, three degrees of frost, though the cherries are all in flower. I can't say much for our climate (*sighs*). I can't. Our climate is not often propitious to the occasion. Yermolay Alexeyevitch, permit me to call your attention to the fact that I purchased myself a pair of boots the day before yesterday, and they creak, I venture to assure you, so that there's no tolerating them. What ought I to grease them with?

LOPAHIN: Oh, shut up! Don't bother me.

EPIHODOV: Every day some misfortune befalls me. I don't complain, I'm used to it, and I wear a smiling face.

(DUNYASHA *comes in, hands* LOPAHIN *the kvass.*)

EPIHODOV: I am going (*stumbles against a chair, which falls over*). There! (*As though triumphant*) There you see now, excuse the expression, an accident like that among others. . . . It's positively remarkable (*goes out*).

DUNYASHA: Do you know, Yermolay Alexeyevitch, I must confess, Epihodov has made me a proposal.

LOPAHIN: Ah!

DUNYASHA: I'm sure I don't know. . . . He's a harmless fellow, but sometimes when he begins talking, there's no making anything of it. It's all very fine and expressive, only there's no understanding it. I've a sort of liking for him too. He loves me to distraction. He's an unfortunate man; every day there's something. They tease him about it—two and twenty misfortunes they call him.

LOPAHIN (*listening*): There! I do believe they're coming.

DUNYASHA: They are coming! What's the matter with me? . . . I'm cold all over.

LOPAHIN: They really are coming. Let's go and meet them. Will she know me? It's five years since I saw her.

DUNYASHA (*in a flutter*): I shall drop this very minute. . . . Ah, I shall drop.

(*There is a sound of two carriages driving up to the house.* LOPAHIN *and* DUNYASHA *go out quickly. The stage is left empty. A noise is heard in the adjoining rooms.* FIRS, *who has driven to meet* MADAME RANEVSKY, *crosses the stage hurriedly leaning on a stick. He is wearing old-fashioned livery and a high hat. He says something to himself, but not a word can be distinguished. The noise behind the scenes goes on increasing. A voice: "Come, let's go in here." Enter* LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA, ANYA, *and* CHARLOTTA IVANOVNA *with a pet dog on a chain, all in travelling dresses.* VARYA *in an out-door coat with a kerchief over her head,* GAEV, SEMYONOV-PISHTCHIK, LOPAHIN, DUNYASHA *with bag and parasol, servants with other articles. All walk across the room.*)

ANYA: Let's come in here. Do you remember what room this is, mamma?

LYUBOV (*joyfully, through her tears*): The nursery!

VARYA: How cold it is, my hands are numb. (*To* LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA) Your rooms, the white room and the lavender one, are just the same as ever, mamma.

LYUBOV: My nursery, dear delightful room. . . . I used to sleep here when I was little . . . (*cries*). And here I am, like a little child . . . (*kisses her brother and* VARYA, *and then her brother again*). Varya's just the same as ever, like a nun. And I knew Dunyasha (*kisses* DUNYASHA).

GAEV: The train was two hours late. What do you think of that? Is that the way to do things?

CHARLOTTA (*to* PISHTCHIK): My dog eats nuts, too.

PISHTCHIK (*wonderingly*): Fancy that!

(*They all go out except* ANYA *and* DUNYASHA.)

DUNYASHA: We've been expecting you so long (*takes* ANYA's *hat and coat*).

ANYA: I haven't slept for four nights on the journey. I feel dreadfully cold.

DUNYASHA: You set out in Lent, there was snow and frost, and now? My darling! (*Laughs and kisses her*) I *have* missed you, my precious, my joy. I must tell you . . . I can't put it off a minute. . . .

ANYA (*wearily*): What now?

DUNYASHA: Epihodov, the clerk, made me a proposal just after Easter.

ANYA: It's always the same thing with you . . . (*straightening her hair*). I've lost all my hairpins . . . (*she is staggering from exhaustion*).

DUNYASHA: I don't know what to think, really. He does love me, he does love me so!

ANYA (*looking towards her door, tenderly*): My own room, my windows just as though I had never gone away. I'm home! Tomorrow morning I shall get up and run into the garden. . . . Oh, if I could get to sleep! I haven't slept all the journey, I was so anxious and worried.

DUNYASHA: Pyotr Sergeyevitch came the day before yesterday.

ANYA (*joyfully*): Petya!

DUNYASHA: He's asleep in the bath house, he has settled in there. I'm afraid of being in their way, says he. (*Glancing at her watch*) I was to have waked him, but Varvara Mihalovna told me not to. Don't you wake him, says she.

(*Enter* VARYA *with a bunch of keys at her waist.*)

VARYA: Dunyasha, coffee and make haste. . . . Mamma's asking for coffee.

DUNYASHA: This very minute (*goes out*).

VARYA: Well, thank God, you've come. You're home again (*petting her*). My little darling has come back! My precious beauty has come back again!

ANYA: I have had a time of it!

VARYA: I can fancy.

ANYA: We set off in Holy Week—it was so cold then, and all the way Charlotta would talk and show off her tricks. What did you want to burden me with Charlotta for?

VARYA: You couldn't have travelled all alone, darling. At seventeen!

ANYA: We got to Paris at last, it was cold there—snow. I speak French shockingly. Mamma lives on the fifth floor, I went up to her and there were a lot of French people, ladies, an old priest with a book. The place smelt of tobacco and so comfortless. I felt sorry, oh! so sorry for mamma all at once, I put my arms round her neck, and hugged her and wouldn't let her go. Mamma was as kind as she could be, and she cried. . . .

VARYA (*through her tears*): Don't speak of it, don't speak of it!

ANYA: She had sold her villa at Mentone, she had nothing left, nothing. I hadn't a farthing left either, we only just had enough to get here. And mamma doesn't understand! When we had dinner at the stations, she always ordered the most expensive things and gave the waiters a whole rouble. Charlotta's just the same. Yasha too must have the same as we do; it's simply awful. You know Yasha is mamma's valet now, we brought him here with us.

VARYA: Yes, I've seen the young rascal.

ANYA: Well, tell me—have you paid the arrears on the mortgage?

VARYA: How could we get the money?

ANYA: Oh, dear! Oh, dear!

VARYA: In August the place will be sold.

ANYA: My goodness!

LOPAHIN (*peeps in at the door and moos like a cow*): Moo! (*Disappears.*)

VARYA (*weeping*): There, that's what I could do to him (*shakes her fist*).

ANYA (*embracing* VARYA, *softly*): Varya, has he made you an offer? (VARYA *shakes her head*) Why, but he loves you. Why is it you don't come to an understanding? What are you waiting for?

VARYA: I believe that there never will be anything between us. He has a lot to do, he has no time for me . . . and takes no notice of me. Bless the man, it makes me miserable to see him. . . . Everyone's talking of our being married, everyone's congratulating me, and all the while there's really nothing in it; it's all like a dream! (*In another tone*) You have a new brooch like a bee.

ANYA (*mournfully*): Mamma bought it. (*Goes into her own room and in a light-hearted childish tone*) And you know, in Paris I went up in a balloon!

VARYA: My darling's home again! My pretty is home again!

(DUNYASHA *returns with the coffee-pot and is making the coffee.*)

VARYA (*standing at the door*): All day long, darling, as I go about looking after the house, I keep dreaming all the time. If only we could marry you to a rich man, then I should feel more at rest. Then I would go off by myself on a pilgrimage to Kiev, to Moscow . . . and so I would spend my life going from one place to another. . . . I would go on and on. . . . What bliss!

ANYA: The birds are singing in the garden. What time is it?

VARYA: It must be nearly three. It's time you were asleep, darling (*going into* ANYA'S *room*). What bliss!

(YASHA *enters with a rug and a travelling bag.*)

YASHA (*crosses the stage, mincingly*): May one come in here, pray?

DUNYASHA: I shouldn't have known you, Yasha. How you have changed abroad.

YASHA: H'm! . . . And who are you?

DUNYASHA: When you went away, I was that high (*shows distance from floor*). Dunyasha, Fyodor's daughter. . . . You don't remember me!

YASHA: H'm! . . . You're a peach! (*Looks round and embraces her: she shrieks and drops a saucer.* YASHA *goes out hastily.*)

VARYA (*in the doorway, in a tone of vexation*): What now?

DUNYASHA (*through her tears*): I have broken a saucer.

VARYA: Well, that brings good luck.

ANYA (*coming out of her room*): We ought to prepare mamma: Petya is here.

VARYA: I told them not to wake him.

ANYA (*dreamily*): It's six years since father died. Then only a month later little brother Grisha was drowned in the river, such a pretty boy he was, only seven. It was more than mamma could bear, so she went away, went away without looking back (*shuddering*). . . . How well I understand her, if only she knew! (*A pause*) And Petya Trofimov was Grisha's tutor, he may remind her.

(*Enter* FIRS: *he is wearing a pea-jacket and a white waistcoat.*)

FIRS (*goes up to the coffee-pot, anxiously*): The mistress will be served here (*puts on white gloves*). Is the coffee ready? (*Sternly to* DUNYASHA) Girl! Where's the cream?

DUNYASHA: Ah, mercy on us! (*Goes out quickly.*)

FIRS (*fussing round the coffee-pot*): Ech! you good-for-nothing! (*Muttering to himself*) Come back from Paris. And the old master used to go to Paris too . . . horses all the way (*laughs*).

VARYA: What is it, Firs?

FIRS: What is your pleasure? (*Gleefully*) My lady has come home! I have lived to see her again! Now I can die (*weeps with joy*).

(*Enter* LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA, GAEV *and* SEMYONOV-PISHTCHIK; *the latter is in a short-waisted full coat of fine cloth, and full trousers.* GAEV, *as he comes in, makes a gesture with his arms and his whole body, as though he were playing billiards.*)

LYUBOV: How does it go? Let me remember. Cannon off the red!

GAEV: That's it—in off the white! Why, once, sister, we used to sleep together in this very room, and now I'm fifty-one, strange as it seems.

LOPAHIN: Yes, time flies.

GAEV: What do you say?

LOPAHIN: Time, I say, flies.

GAEV: What a smell of patchouli!

ANYA: I'm going to bed. Good-night, mamma (*kisses her mother*).

LYUBOV: My precious darling (*kisses her hands*). Are you glad to be home? I can't believe it.

ANYA: Good-night, uncle.

GAEV (*kissing her face and hands*): God bless you! How like you are to your mother! (*To his sister*) At her age you were just the same, Lyuba.

(ANYA *shakes hands with* LOPAHIN *and* PISHTCHIK, *then goes out, shutting the door after her.*)

LYUBOV: She's quite worn out.

PISHTCHIK: Aye, it's a long journey, to be sure.

VARYA (*to* LOPAHIN *and* PISHTCHIK): Well, gentlemen? It's three o'clock and time to say good-bye.

LYUBOV (*laughs*): You're just the same as ever, Varya (*draws her to her and kisses her*). I'll just drink my coffee and then we will all go and rest. (FIRS *puts a cushion under her feet*) Thanks, friend. I am so fond of coffee, I drink it day and night. Thanks, dear old man (*kisses* FIRS).

VARYA: I'll just see whether all the things have been brought in (*goes out*).

LYUBOV: Can it really be me sitting here? (*Laughs*) I want to dance about and clap my hands. (*Covers her face with her hands*) And I could drop asleep in a moment! God knows I love my country, I love it tenderly; I couldn't look out of the window in the train, I kept crying so. (*Through her tears*) But I must drink my coffee, though. Thank you, Firs, thanks, dear old man. I'm so glad to find you still alive.

FIRS: The day before yesterday.

GAEV: He's rather deaf.

LOPAHIN: I have to set off for Harkov directly, at five o'clock. . . . It is annoying! I wanted to have a look at you, and a little talk. . . . You are just as splendid as ever.

PISHTCHIK (*breathing heavily*): Handsomer, indeed. . . . Dressed in Parisian style . . . completely bowled me over.

LOPAHIN: Your brother, Leonid Andreyevitch here, is always saying that I'm a low-born knave, that I'm a money-grubber, but I don't care one straw for that. Let him talk. Only I do want you to believe in me as you used to. I do want your wonderful tender eyes to look at me as they used to in the old days. Merciful God! My father was a serf of your father and of your grandfather, but you—you—did so much for me once, that I've forgotten all that; I love you as though you were my kin . . . more than my kin.

LYUBOV: I can't sit still, I simply can't . . . (*jumps up and walks about in violent agitation*). This happiness is too much for me. . . . You may laugh at me, I know I'm silly. . . . My own bookcase (*kisses the bookcase*). My little table.

GAEV: Nurse died while you were away.

LYUBOV (*sits down and drinks coffee*): Yes, the Kingdom of Heaven be hers! You wrote me of her death.

GAEV: And Anastasy is dead. Squinting Petruchka has left me and is in service now with the police captain in the town (*takes a box of caramels out of his pocket and sucks one*).

PISHTCHIK: My daughter, Dashenka, wishes to be remembered to you.

LOPAHIN: I want to tell you something very pleasant and cheering (*glancing at his watch*). I'm going directly . . . there's no time to say much . . . well, I can say it in a couple of words. I needn't tell you your cherry orchard is to be sold to pay your debts; the 22nd of August is the date fixed for the sale; but don't you worry, dearest lady, you may sleep in peace, there is a way of saving it. . . . This is what I propose. I beg your attention! Your estate is not twenty miles from the town, the railway runs close by it, and if the cherry orchard and the land along the river bank were cut up into building plots and then let on lease for summer villas, you would make an income of at least 25,000 roubles a year out of it.

GAEV: That's all rot, if you'll excuse me.

LYUBOV: I don't quite understand you, Yermolay Alexeyevitch.

LOPAHIN: You will get a rent of at least 25 roubles a year for a three-acre plot from summer visitors, and if you say the word now, I'll bet you what you like there won't be one square foot of ground vacant by the autumn, all the plots will be taken up. I congratulate you; in fact, you are saved. It's a perfect situation with that deep river. Only, of course, it must be cleared—all the old buildings, for example, must be removed, this house too, which is really good for nothing and the old cherry orchard must be cut down.

LYUBOV: Cut down? My dear fellow, forgive me, but you don't know what you are talking about. If there is one thing interesting—remarkable indeed—in the whole province, it's just our cherry orchard.

LOPAHIN: The only thing remarkable about the orchard is that it's a very large one. There's a crop of cherries every alternate year, and then there's nothing to be done with them, no one buys them.

GAEV: This orchard is mentioned in the "Encyclopædia."

LOPAHIN (*glancing at his watch*): If we don't decide on something and don't take some steps, on the 22nd of August the cherry orchard and the whole estate too will be sold by auction. Make up your minds! There is no other way of saving it, I'll take my oath on that. No, No!

FIRS: In the old days, forty or fifty years ago, they used to dry the cherries, soak them, pickle them, make jam too, and they used . . .

GAEV: Be quiet, Firs.

FIRS: And they used to send the preserved cherries to Moscow and to Harkov by the waggon-load. That brought the money in! And the preserved cherries in those days were soft and juicy, sweet and fragrant. . . . They knew the way to do them then. . . .

LYUBOV: And where is the recipe now?

FIRS: It's forgotten. Nobody remembers it.

PISHTCHIK (*to* LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA): What's it like in Paris? Did you eat frogs there?

LYUBOV: Oh, I ate crocodiles.

PISHTCHIK: Fancy that now!

LOPAHIN: There used to be only the gentlefolks and the peasants in the country, but now there are these summer visitors. All the towns, even the small ones, are surrounded nowadays by these summer villas. And one may say for sure, that in another twenty years there'll be many more of these people and that they'll be everywhere. At present the summer visitor only drinks tea in his verandah, but maybe he'll take to working his bit of land too, and then your cherry orchard would become happy, rich and prosperous. . . .

GAEV (*indignant*): What rot!

(*Enter* VARYA *and* YASHA.)

VARYA: There are two telegrams for you, mamma (*takes out keys and opens an old-fashioned bookcase with a loud crack*). Here they are.

LYUBOV: From Paris (*tears the telegrams, without reading them*). I have done with Paris.

GAEV: Do you know, Lyuba, how old that bookcase is? Last week I pulled out the bottom drawer and there I found the date branded on it. The bookcase was made just a hundred years ago. What do you say to that? We might have celebrated its jubilee. Though it's an inanimate object, still it is a *book* case.

PISHTCHIK (*amazed*): A hundred years! Fancy that now.

GAEV: Yes. . . . It is a thing . . . (*feeling the bookcase*). Dear, honoured bookcase! Hail to thee who for more than a hundred years hast served the pure ideals of good and justice; thy silent call

to fruitful labour has never flagged in those hundred years, maintaining (*in tears*) in the generations of man, courage and faith in a brighter future and fostering in us ideals of good and social consciousness (*a pause*).

LOPAHIN: Yes. . . .

LYUBOV: You are just the same as ever, Leonid.

GAEV (*a little embarrassed*): Cannon off the right into the pocket!

LOPAHIN (*looking at his watch*): Well, it's time I was off.

YASHA (*handing* LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA *medicine*): Perhaps you will take your pills now.

PISHTCHIK: You shouldn't take medicines, my dear madam . . . they do no harm and no good. Give them here . . . honoured lady (*takes the pill-box, pours the pills into the hollow of his hand, blows on them, puts them in his mouth and drinks off some kvass*). There!

LYUBOV (*in alarm*): Why, you must be out of your mind!

PISHTCHIK: I have taken all the pills.

LOPAHIN: What a glutton! (*All laugh.*)

FIRS: His honour stayed with us in Easter week, ate a gallon and a half of cucumbers . . . (*mutters*).

LYUBOV: What is he saying?

VARYA: He has taken to muttering like that for the last three years. We are used to it.

YASHA: His declining years!

(CHARLOTTA IVANOVNA, *a very thin, lanky figure in a white dress with a lorgnette in her belt, walks across the stage.*)

LOPAHIN: I beg your pardon, Charlotta Ivanovna, I have not had time to greet you (*tries to kiss her hand*).

CHARLOTTA (*pulling away her hand*): If I let you kiss my hand, you'll be wanting to kiss my elbow, and then my shoulder.

LOPAHIN: I've no luck today! (*All laugh*) Charlotta Ivanovna, show us some tricks!

LYUBOV: Charlotta, do show us some tricks!

CHARLOTTA: I don't want to. I'm sleepy (*goes out*).

LOPAHIN: In three weeks' time we shall meet again (*kisses* LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA'S *hand*). Good-bye till then—I must go. (*To* GAEV) Good-bye. (*Kisses* PISHTCHIK) Good-bye. (*Gives his hand to* VARYA, *then to* FIRS *and* YASHA) I don't want to go. (*To* LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA) If you think over my plan for the villas and make up your mind, then let me know; I will lend you 50,000 roubles. Think of it seriously.

VARYA (*angrily*): Well, do go, for goodness sake.

LOPAHIN: I'm going, I'm going (*goes out*).

GAEV: Low-born knave! I beg pardon, though . . . Varya is going to marry him, he's Varya's fiancé.

VARYA: Don't talk nonsense, uncle.

LYUBOV: Well, Varya, I shall be delighted. He's a good man.

PISHTCHIK: He is, one must acknowledge, a most worthy man. And my Dashenka . . . says too that . . . she says . . . various things (*snores, but at once wakes up*). But all the same, honoured lady, could you oblige me . . . with a loan of 240 roubles . . . to pay the interest on my mortgage tomorrow?

VARYA (*dismayed*): No, no.

LYUBOV: I really haven't any money.

PISHTCHIK: It will turn up (*laughs*). I never lose hope. I thought everything was over, I was a ruined man, and lo and behold—the railway passed through my land and . . . they paid me for it. And something else will turn up again, if not today, then tomorrow . . . Dashenka'll win two hundred thousand . . . she's got a lottery ticket.

LYUBOV: Well, we've finished our coffee, we can go to bed.

FIRS (*brushes* GAEV, *reprovingly*): You have got on the wrong trousers again! What am I to do with you?

VARYA (*softly*): Anya's asleep. (*Softly opens the window*) Now the sun's risen, it's not a bit cold. Look, mamma, what exquisite trees! My goodness! And the air! The starlings are singing!

GAEV (*opens another window*): The orchard is all white. You've not forgotten it, Lyuba? That long avenue that runs straight, straight as an arrow, how it shines on a moonlight night. You remember? You've not forgotten?

LYUBOV (*looking out of the window into the garden*): Oh, my childhood, my innocence! It was in this nursery I used to sleep, from here I looked out into the orchard, happiness waked with me every morning and in those days the orchard was just the same, nothing has changed (*laughs with delight*). All, all white! Oh, my orchard! After the dark gloomy autumn, and the cold winter; you are young again, and full of happiness, the heavenly angels have never left you. . . . If I could cast off the burden that weighs on my heart, if I could forget the past!

GAEV: H'm! and the orchard will be sold to pay our debts; it seems strange. . . .

LYUBOV: See, our mother walking . . . all in white, down the avenue! (*Laughs with delight*) It is she!

GAEV: Where?

VARYA: Oh, don't, mamma!

LYUBOV: There is no one. It was my fancy. On the right there, by the path to the arbour, there is a white tree bending like a woman. . . .

(*Enter* TROFIMOV *wearing a shabby student's uniform and spectacles.*)

LYUBOV: What a ravishing orchard! White masses of blossoms, blue sky. . . .

TROFIMOV: Lyubov Andreyevna! (*She looks round at him*) I will just pay my respects to you and then leave you at once (*kisses her hand warmly*). I was told to wait until morning, but I hadn't the patience to wait any longer. . . .

(LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA *looks at him in perplexity.*)

VARYA (*through her tears*): This is Petya Trofimov.

TROFIMOV: Petya Trofimov, who was your Grisha's tutor. . . . Can I have changed so much?

(LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA *embraces him and weeps quietly.*)

GAEV (*in confusion*): There, there, Lyuba.

VARYA (*crying*): I told you, Petya, to wait till tomorrow.

LYUBOV: My Grisha . . . my boy . . . Grisha . . . my son!

VARYA: We can't help it, mamma, it is God's will.

TROFIMOV (*softly through his tears*): There . . . there.

LYUBOV (*weeping quietly*): My boy was lost . . . drowned. Why? Oh, why, dear Petya? (*More quietly*) Anya is asleep in there, and I'm talking loudly . . . making this noise. . . . But, Petya? Why have you grown so ugly? Why do you look so old?

TROFIMOV: A peasant-woman in the train called me a mangy-looking gentleman.

LYUBOV: You were quite a boy then, a pretty little student, and now your hair's thin—and spectacles. Are you really a student still? (*Goes towards the door.*)

TROFIMOV: I seem likely to be a perpetual student.

LYUBOV (*kisses her brother, then* VARYA): Well, go to bed. . . . You are older too, Leonid.

PISHTCHIK (*follows her*): I suppose it's time we were asleep. . . . Ugh! my gout. I'm staying the night! Lyubov Andreyevna, my dear soul, if you could . . . tomorrow morning . . . 240 roubles.

GAEV: That's always his story.

PISHTCHIK: 240 roubles . . . to pay the interest on my mortgage.

LYUBOV: My dear man, I have no money.

PISHTCHIK: I'll pay it back, my dear . . . a trifling sum.

LYUBOV: Oh, well, Leonid will give it you. . . . You give him the money, Leonid.

GAEV: Me give it him! Let him wait till he gets it!

LYUBOV: It can't be helped, give it him. He needs it. He'll pay it back.

(LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA, TROFIMOV, PISHTCHIK *and* FIRS *go out.* GAEV, VARYA *and* YASHA *remain.*)

GAEV: Sister hasn't got out of the habit of flinging away her money. (*To* YASHA) Get away, my good fellow, you smell of the hen-house.

YASHA (*with a grin*): And you, Leonid Andreyevitch, are just the same as ever.

GAEV: What's that? (*To* VARYA) What did he say?

VARYA (*to* YASHA): Your mother has come from the village; she has been sitting in the servants' room since yesterday, waiting to see you.

YASHA: Oh, bother her!

VARYA: For shame!

YASHA: What's the hurry? She might just as well have come tomorrow (*goes out*).

VARYA: Mamma's just the same as ever, she hasn't changed a bit. If she had her own way, she'd give away everything.

GAEV: Yes (*a pause*). If a great many remedies are suggested for some disease, it means that the disease is incurable. I keep thinking and racking my brains; I have many schemes, a great many, and that really means none. If we could only come in for a legacy from somebody, or marry our Anya to a very rich man, or we might go to Yaroslavl and try our luck with our old aunt, the Countess. She's very, very rich, you know.

VARYA (*weeps*): If God would help us.

GAEV: Don't blubber. Aunt's very rich, but she doesn't like us. First, sister married a lawyer instead of a nobleman. . . .

(ANYA *appears in the doorway.*)

GAEV: And then her conduct, one can't call it virtuous. She is good, and kind, and nice, and I love her, but, however one allows for extenuating circumstances, there's no denying that she's an immoral woman. One feels it in her slightest gesture.

VARYA (*in a whisper*): Anya's in the doorway.

GAEV: What do you say? (*A pause*) It's queer, there seems to be something wrong with my right eye. I don't see as well as I did. And on Thursday when I was in the district Court . . .

(*Enter* ANYA.)

VARYA: Why aren't you asleep, Anya?

ANYA: I can't get to sleep.

GAEV: My pet (*kisses* ANYA's *face and hands*). My child (*weeps*). You are not my niece, you are my angel, you are everything to me. Believe me, believe . . .

ANYA: I believe you, uncle. Everyone loves you and respects you . . . but, uncle dear, you must be silent . . . simply be silent. What were you saying just now about my mother, about your own sister? What made you say that?

GAEV: Yes, yes . . . (*puts his hand over his face*). Really, that was awful! My God, save me! And today I made a speech to the bookcase . . . so stupid! And only when I had finished, I saw how stupid it was.

VARYA: It's true, uncle, you ought to keep quiet. Don't talk, that's all.

ANYA: If you could keep from talking, it would make things easier for you, too.

GAEV: I won't speak (*kisses* ANYA's *and* VARYA's *hands*). I'll be silent. Only this is about business. On Thursday I was in the district Court; well, there was a large party of us there and we began talking of one thing and another, and this and that, and do you know, I believe that it will be possible to raise a loan on an I.O.U. to pay the arrears on the mortgage.

VARYA: If the Lord would help us!

GAEV: I'm going on Tuesday; I'll talk of it again. (*To* VARYA) Don't blubber. (*To* ANYA) Your mamma will talk to Lopahin; of course, he won't refuse her. And as soon as you're rested you shall go to Yaroslavl to the Countess, your great-aunt. So we shall all set to work in three directions at once, and the business is done. We shall pay off arrears, I'm convinced of it (*puts a caramel in his mouth*). I swear on my honour, I swear by anything you like, the estate shan't be sold (*excitedly*). By my own happiness, I swear it! Here's my hand on it, call me the basest, vilest of men, if I let it come to an auction! Upon my soul I swear it!

ANYA (*her equanimity has returned, she is quite happy*): How good you are, uncle, and how clever! (*Embraces her uncle*) I'm at peace now! Quite at peace! I'm happy!

(*Enter* FIRS.)

FIRS (*reproachfully*): Leonid Andreyevitch, have you no fear of God? When are you going to bed?

GAEV: Directly, directly. You can go, Firs. I'll . . . yes, I will undress myself. Come, children, bye-bye. We'll go into details tomorrow, but now go to bed (*kisses* ANYA *and* VARYA). I'm a man of the eighties. They run down that period, but still I can say I have had to suffer not a little for my convictions in my life. It's not for nothing that the peasant loves me. One must know the peasant! One must know how . . .

ANYA: At it again, uncle!

VARYA: Uncle dear, you'd better be quiet!

FIRS (*angrily*): Leonid Andreyevitch!

GAEV: I'm coming. I'm coming. Go to bed. Potted the shot—there's a shot for you! A beauty! (*Goes out,* FIRS *hobbling after him.*)

ANYA: My mind's at rest now. I don't want to go to Yaroslavl, I don't like my great-aunt, but still my mind's at rest. Thanks to uncle (*sits down*).

VARYA: We must go to bed. I'm going. Something unpleasant happened while you were away. In the old servants' quarters there are only the old servants, as you know—Efimyushka, Polya and Yevstigney—and Karp too. They began letting stray people in to spend the night—I said nothing. But all at once I heard they had been spreading a report that I gave them nothing but pease pudding to eat. Out of stinginess, you know. . . . And it was all Yevstigney's doing. . . . Very well, I said to myself. . . . If that's how it is, I thought, wait a bit. I sent for Yevstigney . . . (*yawns*). He comes. . . . "How's this, Yevstigney," I said, "you could be such a fool as to? . . . " (*Looking at* ANYA) Anitchka! (*a pause*). She's asleep (*puts her arm round* ANYA). Come to bed . . . come along! (*Leads her*) My darling has fallen asleep! Come . . . (*They go.*)

(*Far away beyond the orchard a shepherd plays on a pipe.* TROFIMOV *crosses the stage and, seeing* VARYA *and* ANYA, *stands still.*)

VARYA: Sh! asleep, asleep. Come, my own.

ANYA (*softly, half asleep*): I'm so tired. Still those bells. Uncle . . . dear . . . mamma and uncle. . . .

VARYA: Come, my own, come along.

(*They go into* ANYA'S *room.*)

TROFIMOV (*tenderly*): My sunshine! My spring.

(*The Curtain Falls.*)

Act Two

The open country. An old shrine, long abandoned and fallen out of the perpendicular; near it a well, large stones that have apparently once been tombstones, and an old garden seat. The road to GAEV'S *house is seen. On one side rise dark poplars; and there the cherry orchard begins. In the distance a row of telegraph poles and far, far away on the horizon there is faintly outlined a great town, only visible in very fine clear weather. It is near sunset.* CHARLOTTA, YASHA *and* DUNYASHA *are sitting on the seat.* EPIHODOV *is standing near, playing something mournful on a guitar. All sit plunged in thought.* CHARLOTTA *wears an old forage cap; she has taken a gun from her shoulder and is tightening the buckle on the strap.*

CHARLOTTA (*musingly*): I haven't a real passport of my own, and I don't know how old I am, and I always feel that I'm a young thing. When I was a little girl, my father and mother used to travel about to fairs and give performances—very good ones. And I used to dance *salto-mortale* and all sorts of things. And when papa and mamma died, a German lady took me and had me educated. And so I grew up and became a governess. But where I came from, and who I am, I don't know. . . . Who my parents were, very likely they weren't married . . . I don't know (*takes a cucumber out of her pocket and eats*). I know nothing at all (*a pause*). One wants to talk and has no one to talk to . . . I have nobody.

EPIHODOV (*plays on the guitar and sings*): "What care I for the noisy world! What care I for friends or foes!" How agreeable it is to play on the mandolin!

DUNYASHA: That's a guitar, not a mandolin (*looks in a hand-mirror and powders herself*).

EPIHODOV: To a man mad with love, it's a mandolin. (*Sings*) "Were her heart but aglow with love's mutual flame." (YASHA *joins in.*)

CHARLOTTA: How shockingly these people sing! Foo! Like jackals!

DUNYASHA (*to* YASHA): What happiness, though, to visit foreign lands.

YASHA: Ah, yes! I rather agree with you there (*yawns, then lights a cigar*).

EPIHODOV: That's comprehensible. In foreign lands everything has long since reached full complexion.

YASHA: That's so, of course.

EPIHODOV: I'm a cultivated man, I read remarkable books of all sorts, but I can never make out the tendency I am myself precisely inclined for, whether to live or to shoot myself, speaking precisely, but nevertheless I always carry a revolver. Here it is . . . (*shows revolver*).

CHARLOTTA: I've had enough, and now I'm going (*puts on the gun*). Epihodov, you're a very clever fellow, and a very terrible one too, all the women must be wild about you. Br-r-r! (*Goes*) These clever fellows are all so stupid; there's not a creature for me to speak to. . . . Always alone, alone, nobody belonging to me . . . and who I am, and why I'm on earth, I don't know (*walks away slowly*).

EPIHODOV: Speaking precisely, not touching upon other subjects, I'm bound to admit about myself, that destiny behaves mercilessly to me, as a storm to a little boat. If, let us suppose, I am mistaken, then why did I wake up this morning, to quote an example, and look round, and there on my chest was a spider of fearful magnitude . . . like this (*shows with both hands*). And then I take up a jug of kvass, to quench my thirst, and in it there is something in the highest degree unseemly of the nature of a cockroach (*a pause*). Have you read Buckle? (*A pause*) I am desirous of troubling you, Dunyasha, with a couple of words.

DUNYASHA: Well, speak.

EPIHODOV: I should be desirous to speak with you alone (*sighs*).

DUNYASHA (*embarrassed*): Well—only bring me my mantle first. It's by the cupboard. It's rather damp here.

EPIHODOV: Certainly. I will fetch it. Now I know what I must do with my revolver (*takes guitar and goes off playing on it*).

YASHA: Two and twenty misfortunes! Between ourselves, he's a fool (*yawns*).

DUNYASHA: God grant he doesn't shoot himself! (*A pause*) I am so nervous, I'm always in a flutter. I was a little girl when I was taken into our lady's house, and now I have quite grown out of peasant ways, and my hands are white, as white as a lady's. I'm such a delicate, sensitive creature, I'm afraid of everything. I'm so frightened. And if you deceive me, Yasha, I don't know what will become of my nerves.

YASHA (*kisses her*): You're a peach! Of course a girl must never forget herself; what I dislike more than anything is a girl being flighty in her behaviour.

DUNYASHA: I'm passionately in love with you, Yasha; you are a man of culture—you can give your opinion about anything (*a pause*).

YASHA (*yawns*): Yes, that's so. My opinion is this: if a girl loves anyone, that means that she has no principles (*a pause*). It's pleasant smoking a cigar in the open air (*listens*). Someone's coming this way . . . it's the gentlefolk (DUNYASHA *embraces him impulsively*). Go home, as though you had been to the river to bathe; go by that path, or else they'll meet you and suppose I have made an appointment with you here. That I can't endure.

DUNYASHA (*coughing softly*): The cigar has made my head ache . . . (*goes off*).

(YASHA *remains sitting near the shrine. Enter* LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA, GAEV *and* LOPAHIN.)

LOPAHIN: You must make up your mind once for all—there's no time to lose. It's quite a simple question, you know. Will you consent to letting the land for building or not? One word in answer: Yes or no? Only one word!

LYUBOV: Who is smoking such horrible cigars here? (*Sits down.*)

GAEV: Now the railway line has been brought near, it's made things very convenient (*sits down*). Here we have been over and lunched in town. Cannon off the white! I should like to go home and have a game.

LYUBOV: You have plenty of time.

LOPAHIN: Only one word! (*Beseechingly*) Give me an answer!

GAEV (*yawning*): What do you say?

LYUBOV (*looks in her purse*): I had quite a lot of money here yesterday, and there's scarcely any left today. My poor Varya feeds us all on milk soup for the sake of economy; the old folks in the kitchen get nothing but pease pudding, while I waste my money in a senseless way (*drops purse, scattering gold pieces*). There, they have all fallen out! (*Annoyed.*)

YASHA: Allow me, I'll soon pick them up (*collects the coins*).

LYUBOV: Pray do, Yasha. And what did I go off to the town to lunch for? Your restaurant's a wretched place with its music and the tablecloth smelling of soap. . . . Why drink so much, Leonid? And eat so much? And talk so much? Today you talked a great deal again in the restaurant, and all so inappropriately. About the era of the 'seventies, about the decadents. And to whom? Talking to waiters about decadents!

LOPAHIN: Yes.

GAEV (*waving his hand*): I'm incorrigible; that's evident. (*Irritably to* YASHA) Why is it you keep fidgeting about in front of us!

YASHA (*laughs*): I can't help laughing when I hear your voice.

GAEV (*to his sister*): Either I or he . . .

LYUBOV: Get along! Go away, Yasha.

YASHA (*gives* LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA *her purse*): Directly (*hardly able to suppress his laughter*). This minute . . . (*goes off*).

LOPAHIN: Deriganov, the millionaire, means to buy your estate. They say he is coming to the sale himself.

LYUBOV: Where did you hear that?

LOPAHIN: That's what they say in town.

GAEV: Our aunt in Yaroslavl has promised to send help; but when, and how much she will send, we don't know.

LOPAHIN: How much will she send? A hundred thousand? Two hundred?

LYUBOV: Oh, well! . . . Ten or fifteen thousand, and we must be thankful to get that.

LOPAHIN: Forgive me, but such reckless people as you are—such queer, unbusiness-like people—I never met in my life. One tells you in plain Russian your estate is going to be sold, and you seem not to understand it.

LYUBOV: What are we to do? Tell us what to do.

LOPAHIN: I do tell you every day. Every day I say the same thing. You absolutely must let the cherry orchard and the land on building leases; and do it at once, as quick as may be—the auction's close upon us! Do understand! Once make up your mind to build villas, and you can raise as much money as you like, and then you are saved.

LYUBOV: Villas and summer visitors—forgive me saying so—it's so vulgar.

GAEV: There I perfectly agree with you.

LOPAHIN: I shall sob, or scream, or fall into a fit. I can't stand it! You drive me mad! (*To* GAEV) You're an old woman!

GAEV: What do you say?

LOPAHIN: An old woman! (*Gets up to go.*)

LYUBOV (*in dismay*): No, don't go! Do stay, my dear friend! Perhaps we shall think of something.

LOPAHIN: What is there to think of?

LYUBOV: Don't go, I entreat you! With you here it's more cheerful, anyway (*a pause*). I keep expecting something, as though the house were going to fall about our ears.

GAEV (*in profound dejection*): Potted the white! It fails—a kiss.

LYUBOV: We have been great sinners. . . .

LOPAHIN: You have no sins to repent of.

GAEV (*puts a caramel in his mouth*): They say I've eaten up my property in caramels (*laughs*).

LYUBOV: Oh, my sins! I've always thrown my money away recklessly like a lunatic. I married a man who made nothing but debts. My husband died of champagne—he drank dreadfully. To my misery I loved another man, and immediately—it was my first

punishment—the blow fell upon me, here, in the river . . . my boy was drowned and I went abroad—went away for ever, never to return, not to see that river again . . . I shut my eyes, and fled, distracted, and *he* after me . . . pitilessly, brutally. I bought a villa at Mentone, for *he* fell ill there, and for three years I had no rest day or night. His illness wore me out, my soul was dried up. And last year, when my villa was sold to pay my debts, I went to Paris and there he robbed me of everything and abandoned me for another woman; and I tried to poison myself. . . . So stupid, so shameful! . . . And suddenly I felt a yearning for Russia, for my country, for my little girl . . . (*dries her tears*). Lord, Lord, be merciful! Forgive my sins! Do not chastise me more! (*Takes a telegram out of her pocket*) I got this today from Paris. He implores forgiveness, entreats me to return (*tears up the telegram*). I fancy there is music somewhere (*listens*).

GAEV: That's our famous Jewish orchestra. You remember, four violins, a flute and a double bass.

LYUBOV: That still in existence? We ought to send for them one evening, and give a dance.

LOPAHIN (*listens*): I can't hear. . . . (*Hums softly*) "For money the Germans will turn a Russian into a Frenchman." (*Laughs*) I did see such a piece at the theatre yesterday! It was funny!

LYUBOV: And most likely there was nothing funny in it. You shouldn't look at plays, you should look at yourselves a little oftener. How grey your lives are! How much nonsense you talk.

LOPAHIN: That's true. One may say honestly, we live a fool's life (*pause*). My father was a peasant, an idiot; he knew nothing and taught me nothing, only beat me when he was drunk, and always with his stick. In reality I am just such another blockhead and idiot. I've learnt nothing properly. I write a wretched hand. I write so that I feel ashamed before folks, like a pig.

LYUBOV: You ought to get married, my dear fellow.

LOPAHIN: Yes . . . that's true.

LYUBOV: You should marry our Varya, she's a good girl.

LOPAHIN: Yes.

LYUBOV: She's a good-natured girl, she's busy all day long, and what's more, she loves you. And you have liked her for ever so long.

LOPAHIN: Well? I'm not against it. . . . She's a good girl (*pause*).

GAEV: I've been offered a place in the bank: 6,000 roubles a year. Did you know?

LYUBOV: You would never do for that! You must stay as you are.

(*Enter* FIRS *with overcoat.*)

FIRS: Put it on, sir, it's damp.

GAEV (*putting it on*): You bother me, old fellow.

FIRS: You can't go on like this. You went away in the morning without leaving word (*looks him over*).

LYUBOV: You look older, Firs!

FIRS: What is your pleasure?

LOPAHIN: You look older, she said.

FIRS: I've had a long life. They were arranging my wedding before your papa was born . . . (*laughs*). I was the head footman before the emancipation came. I wouldn't consent to be set free then; I stayed on with the old master . . . (*a pause*). I remember what rejoicings they made and didn't know themselves what they were rejoicing over.

LOPAHIN: Those were fine old times. There was flogging anyway.

FIRS (*not hearing*): To be sure! The peasants knew their place, and the masters knew theirs; but now they're all at sixes and sevens, there's no making it out.

GAEV: Hold your tongue, Firs. I must go to town tomorrow. I have been promised an introduction to a general, who might let us have a loan.

LOPAHIN: You won't bring that off. And you won't pay your arrears, you may rest assured of that.

LYUBOV: That's all his nonsense. There is no such general.

(*Enter* TROFIMOV, ANYA *and* VARYA.)

GAEV: Here come our girls.

ANYA: There's mamma on the seat.

LYUBOV (*tenderly*): Come here, come along. My darlings! (*Embraces* ANYA *and* VARYA) If you only knew how I love you both. Sit beside me, there, like that. (*All sit down.*)

LOPAHIN: Our perpetual student is always with the young ladies.

TROFIMOV: That's not your business.

LOPAHIN: He'll soon be fifty, and he's still a student.

TROFIMOV: Drop your idiotic jokes.

LOPAHIN: Why are you so cross, you queer fish?

TROFIMOV: Oh, don't persist!

LOPAHIN (*laughs*): Allow me to ask you what's your idea of me?

TROFIMOV: I'll tell you my idea of you, Yermolay Alexeyevitch: you are a rich man, you'll soon be a millionaire. Well, just as in the economy of nature a wild beast is of use, who devours everything that comes in his way, so you too have your use.

(*All laugh.*)

VARYA: Better tell us something about the planets, Petya.

LYUBOV: No, let us go on with the conversation we had yesterday.

TROFIMOV: What was it about?

GAEV: About pride.

TROFIMOV: We had a long conversation yesterday, but we came to no conclusion. In pride, in your sense of it, there is something mystical. Perhaps you are right from your point of view; but if one looks at it simply, without subtlety, what sort of pride can there be, what sense is there in it, if man in his physiological formation is very imperfect, if in the immense majority of cases he is coarse, dull-witted, profoundly unhappy? One must give up glorification of self. One should work, and nothing else.

GAEV: One must die in any case.

TROFIMOV: Who knows? And what does it mean—dying? Perhaps man has a hundred senses, and only the five we know are lost at death, while the other ninety-five remain alive.

LYUBOV: How clever you are, Petya!

LOPAHIN (*ironically*): Fearfully clever!

TROFIMOV: Humanity progresses, perfecting its powers. Everything that is beyond its ken now will one day become familiar and comprehensible; only we must work, we must with all our powers aid the seeker after truth. Here among us in Russia the workers are few in number as yet. The vast majority of the intellectual people I know, seek nothing, do nothing, are not fit as yet for work of any kind. They call themselves intellectual, but they treat their servants as inferiors, behave to the peasants as though they were animals, learn little, read nothing seriously, do practically nothing, only talk about science and know very little about art. They are all serious people, they all have severe faces, they all talk of weighty matters and air their theories, and yet the vast majority of us—ninety-nine per cent.—live like savages, at the least thing fly to blows and abuse, eat piggishly, sleep in filth and stuffiness, bugs everywhere, stench and damp and moral impurity. And it's clear all our fine talk is only to divert our attention and other people's. Show me where to find the crèches there's so much talk about, and the reading-rooms? They only exist in novels: in real life there are none of them. There is nothing but filth and vulgarity and Asiatic apathy. I fear and dislike very serious faces. I'm afraid of serious conversations. We should do better to be silent.

LOPAHIN: You know, I get up at five o'clock in the morning, and I work from morning to night; and I've money, my own and other people's, always passing through my hands, and I see what people are made of all round me. One has only to begin to do anything to see how few honest, decent people there are. Sometimes when I lie awake at night, I think: "Oh! Lord, thou hast given us immense forests, boundless plains, the widest horizons, and living here we ourselves ought really to be giants."

LYUBOV: You ask for giants! They are no good except in story-books; in real life they frighten us.

(EPIHODOV *advances in the background, playing on the guitar.*)

LYUBOV (*dreamily*): There goes Epihodev.

ANYA (*dreamily*): There goes Epihodov.

GAEV: The sun has set, my friends.

TROFIMOV: Yes.

GAEV (*not loudly, but, as it were, declaiming*): O nature, divine nature, thou art bright with eternal lustre, beautiful and indifferent! Thou, whom we call mother, thou dost unite within thee life and death! Thou dost give life and dost destroy!

VARYA (*in a tone of supplication*): Uncle!

ANYA: Uncle, you are at it again!

TROFIMOV: You'd much better be cannoning off the red!

GAEV: I'll hold my tongue, I will.

(*All sit plunged in thought. Perfect stillness. The only thing audible is the muttering of* FIRS. *Suddenly there is a sound in the distance, as it were from the sky—the sound of a breaking harp-string, mournfully dying away.*)

LYUBOV: What is that?

LOPAHIN: I don't know. Somewhere far away a bucket fallen and broken in the pits. But somewhere very far away.

GAEV: It might be a bird of some sort—such as a heron.

TROFIMOV: Or an owl.

LYUBOV (*shudders*): I don't know why, but it's horrid (*a pause*).

FIRS: It was the same before the calamity—the owl hooted and the samovar hissed all the time.

GAEV: Before what calamity?

FIRS: Before the emancipation (*a pause*).

LYUBOV: Come, my friends, let us be going; evening is falling. (*To* ANYA) There are tears in your eyes. What is it, darling? (*Embraces her.*)

ANYA: Nothing, mamma; it's nothing.

TROFIMOV: There is somebody coming.

(*The wayfarer appears in a shabby white forage cap and an overcoat; he is slightly drunk.*)

WAYFARER: Allow me to inquire, can I get to the station this way?

GAEV: Yes. Go along that road.

WAYFARER: I thank you most feelingly (*coughing*). The weather is superb. (*Declaims*) My brother, my suffering brother! . . . Come out to the Volga! Whose groan do you hear? . . . (*To* VARYA) Mademoiselle, vouchsafe a hungry Russian thirty kopeks.

(VARYA *utters a shriek of alarm.*)

LOPAHIN (*angrily*): There's a right and a wrong way of doing everything!

LYUBOV (*hurriedly*): Here, take this (*looks in her purse*). I've no silver. No matter—here's gold for you.

WAYFARER: I thank you most feelingly! (*Goes off.*)

(*Laughter.*)

VARYA (*frightened*): I'm going home—I'm going . . . Oh, mamma, the servants have nothing to eat, and you gave him gold!

LYUBOV: There's no doing anything with me. I'm so silly! When we get home, I'll give you all I possess. Yermolay Alexeyevitch, you will lend me some more . . . !

LOPAHIN: I will.

LYUBOV: Come, friends, it's time to be going. And Varya, we have made a match of it for you. I congratulate you.

VARYA (*through her tears*): Mamma, that's not a joking matter.

LOPAHIN: "Ophelia, get thee to a nunnery!"

GAEV: My hands are trembling; it's a long while since I had a game of billiards.

LOPAHIN: "Ophelia! Nymph, in thy orisons be all my sins remember'd."

LYUBOV: Come, it will soon be supper-time.

VARYA: How he frightened me! My heart's simply throbbing.

LOPAHIN: Let me remind you, ladies and gentlemen: on the 22nd of August the cherry orchard will be sold. Think about that! Think about it!

(*All go off, except* TROFIMOV *and* ANYA.)

ANYA (*laughing*): I'm grateful to the wayfarer! He frightened Varya and we are left alone.

TROFIMOV: Varya's afraid we shall fall in love with each other, and for days together she won't leave us. With her narrow brain she can't grasp that we are above love. To eliminate the petty and transitory which hinders us from being free and happy—that is the aim and meaning of our life. Forward! We go forward irresistibly towards the bright star that shines yonder in the distance. Forward! Do not lag behind, friends.

ANYA (*claps her hands*): How well you speak! (*A pause*) It is divine here today.

TROFIMOV: Yes, it's glorious weather.

ANYA: Somehow, Petya, you've made me so that I don't love the cherry orchard as I used to. I used to love it so dearly. I used to think that there was no spot on earth like our garden.

TROFIMOV: All Russia is our garden. The earth is great and beautiful —there are many beautiful places in it (*a pause*). Think only, Anya, your grandfather, and great-grandfather, and all your ancestors were slave-owners—the owners of living souls—and from every cherry in the orchard, from every leaf, from every trunk there are human creatures looking at you. Cannot you hear their voices? Oh, it is awful! Your orchard is a fearful thing, and when in the evening or at night one walks about the orchard, the old bark on the trees glimmers dimly in the dusk, and the old cherry trees seem to be dreaming of centuries gone by and tortured by fearful visions. Yes! We are at least two hundred years behind, we have really gained nothing yet, we have no definite attitude to the past, we do nothing but theorise or complain of depression or drink vodka. It is clear that to begin to live in the present we must first expiate our past, we must break with it; and we can expiate it only by suffering, by extraordinary unceasing labour. Understand that, Anya.

ANYA: The house we live in has long ceased to be our own, and I shall leave it, I give you my word.

TROFIMOV: If you have the house keys, fling them into the well and go away. Be free as the wind.

ANYA (*in ecstasy*): How beautifully you said that!

TROFIMOV: Believe me, Anya, believe me! I am not thirty yet, I am young, I am still a student, but I have gone through so much already! As soon as winter comes I am hungry, sick, careworn, poor as a beggar, and what ups and downs of fortune have I not known! And my soul was always, every minute, day and night, full of inexplicable forebodings. I have a foreboding of happiness, Anya. I see glimpses of it already.

ANYA (*pensively*): The moon is rising.

(EPIHODOV *is heard playing still the same mournful song on the guitar. The moon rises. Somewhere near the poplars* VARYA *is looking for* ANYA *and calling* "Anya! where are you?")

TROFIMOV: Yes, the moon is rising (*a pause*). Here is happiness—here it comes! It is coming nearer and nearer; already I can hear its footsteps. And if we never see it—if we may never know it—what does it matter? Others will see it after us.

VARYA'S VOICE: Anya! Where are you?

TROFIMOV: That Varya again! (*Angrily*) It's revolting!

ANYA: Well, let's go down to the river. It's lovely there.

TROFIMOV: Yes, let's go. (*They go.*)

VARYA'S VOICE: Anya! Anya!

(*The Curtain Falls.*)

Act Three

A drawing-room divided by an arch from a larger drawing-room. A chandlier burning. The Jewish orchestra, the same that was mentioned in Act II, is heard playing in the ante-room. It is evening. In the larger drawing-room they are dancing the grand chain. The voice of SEMYONOV-PISHTCHIK: "*Promenade à une paire!*" *Then enter the drawing-room in couples first* PISHTCHIK *and* CHARLOTTA IVANOVA, *then* TROFIMOV *and* LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA, *thirdly* ANYA *with the Post-Office Clerk, fourthly* VARYA *with the Station Master, and other guests.* VARYA *is quietly weeping and wiping away her tears as she dances. In the last couple is* DUNYASHA. *They move across the drawing-room.* PISHTCHIK *shouts:* Grand rond, balancez!" *and* "Les Cavaliers à genou et remerciez vos dames."

FIRS *in a swallow-tail coat brings in seltzer water on a tray.* PISHTCHIK *and* TROFIMOV *enter the drawing-room.*

PISHTCHIK: I am a full-blooded man; I have already had two strokes. Dancing's hard work for me, but as they say, if you're in the pack, you must bark with the rest. I'm as strong, I may say, as a horse. My parent, who would have his joke—may the Kingdom of Heaven be his!—used to say about our origin that the ancient stock of the Semyonov-Pishtchiks was derived from the very horse that Caligula made a member of the senate (*sits down*). But I've no money, that's where the mischief is. A hungry dog believes in nothing but meat . . . . (*snores, but at once wakes up*). That's like me . . . I can think of nothing but money.

TROFIMOV: There really is something horsy about your appearance.

PISHTCHIK: Well . . . a horse is a fine beast . . . a horse can be sold.

(*There is the sound of billiards being played in an adjoining room.* VARYA *appears in the arch leading to the larger drawing-room.*)

TROFIMOV (*teasing*): Madame Lopahin! Madame Lopahin!

VARYA (*angrily*): Mangy-looking gentleman!

TROFIMOV: Yes, I am a mangy-looking gentleman, and I'm proud of it!

VARYA (*pondering bitterly*): Here we have hired musicians and nothing to pay them! (*Goes out.*)

TROFIMOV (*to* PISHTCHIK): If the energy you have wasted during your lifetime in trying to find the money to pay your interest, had gone to something else, you might in the end have turned the world upside down.

PISHTCHIK: Nietzsche, the philosopher, a very great and celebrated man . . . of enormous intellect . . . says in his works, that one can make forged bank-notes.

TROFIMOV: Why, have you read Nietzsche?

PISHTCHIK: What next . . . Dashenka told me. . . . And now I am in such a position, I might just as well forge bank-notes. The day after tomorrow I must pay 310 roubles—130 I have procured (*feels in his pockets, in alarm*). The money's gone! I have lost my money! (*Through his tears*) Where's the money? (*Gleefully*) Why, here it is behind the lining. . . . It has made me hot all over.

(*Enter* LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA *and* CHARLOTTA IVANOVNA.)

LYUBOV (*hums the Lezginka*): Why is Leonid so long? What can he be doing in town? (*To* DUNYASHA) Offer the musicians some tea.

TROFIMOV: The sale hasn't taken place, most likely.

LYUBOV: It's the wrong time to have the orchestra, and the wrong time to give a dance. Well, never mind (*sits down and hums softly*).

CHARLOTTA (*gives* PISHTCHIK *a pack of cards*): Here's a pack of cards. Think of any card you like.

PISHTCHIK: I've thought of one.

CHARLOTTA: Shuffle the pack now. That's right. Give it here, my dear Mr. Pishtchik. Ein, zwei, drei—now look, it's in your breast pocket.

PISHTCHIK (*taking a card out of his breast pocket*): The eight of spades! Perfectly right! (*Wonderingly*) Fancy that now!

CHARLOTTA (*holding pack of cards in her hands, to* TROFIMOV): Tell me quickly which is the top card.

TROFIMOV: Well, the queen of spades.

CHARLOTTA: It is! (*To* PISHTCHIK) Well, which card is uppermost?

PISHTCHIK: The ace of hearts.

CHARLOTTA: It is! (*Claps her hands, pack of cards disappears*) Ah! what lovely weather it is today!

(*A mysterious feminine voice which seems coming out of the floor answers her.* "Oh, yes, it's magnificent weather, madam.")

CHARLOTTA: You are my perfect ideal.

VOICE: And I greatly admire you too, madam.

STATION MASTER (*applauding*): The lady ventriloquist—bravo!

PISHTCHIK (*wonderingly*): Fancy that now! Most enchanting Charlotta Ivanovna. I'm simply in love with you.

CHARLOTTA: In love? (*Shrugging shoulders*) What do you know of love, guter Mensch, aber schlechter Musikant.

TROFIMOV (*pats* PISHTCHIK *on the shoulder*): You dear old horse. . . .

CHARLOTTA: Attention, please! Another trick! (*Takes a travelling rug from a chair*) Here's a very good rug; I want to sell it (*shaking it out*). Doesn't anyone want to buy it?

PISHTCHIK (*wonderingly*): Fancy that!

CHARLOTTA: Ein, zwei, drei! (*Quickly picks up rug she has dropped; behind the rug stands* ANYA; *she makes a curtsey, runs to her mother, embraces her and runs back into the larger drawing-room amidst general enthusiasm.*)

LYUBOV (*applauds*): Bravo! Bravo!

CHARLOTTA: Now again! Ein, zwei, drei! (*Lifts up the rug; behind the rug stands* VARYA, *bowing.*)

PISHTCHIK (*wonderingly*): Fancy that now!

CHARLOTTA: That's the end (*throws the rug at* PISHTCHIK, *makes a curtsey, runs into the larger drawing-room*).

PISHTCHIK (*hurries after her*): Mischievous creature! Fancy! (*Goes out.*)

LYUBOV: And still Leonid doesn't come. I can't understand what he's doing in the town so long! Why, everything must be over by now. The estate is sold, or the sale has not taken place. Why keep us so long in suspense?

VARYA (*trying to console her*): Uncle's bought it. I feel sure of that.

TROFIMOV (*ironically*): Oh, yes!

VARYA: Great-aunt sent him an authorisation to buy it in her name, and transfer the debt. She's doing it for Anya's sake, and I'm sure God will be merciful. Uncle will buy it.

LYUBOV: My aunt in Yaroslavl sent fifteen thousand to buy the estate in her name, she doesn't trust us—but that's not enough even to pay the arrears (*hides her face in her hands*). My fate is being sealed today, my fate . . .

TROFIMOV (*teasing* VARYA): Madame Lopahin.

VARYA (*angrily*): Perpetual student! Twice already you've been sent down from the University.

LYUBOV: Why are you angry, Varya? He's teasing you about Lopahin. Well, what of that? Marry Lopahin if you like, he's a good man, and interesting; if you don't want to, don't! Nobody compels you, darling.

VARYA: I must tell you plainly, mamma, I look at the matter seriously; he's a good man, I like him.

LYUBOV: Well, marry him. I can't see what you're waiting for.

VARYA: Mamma. I can't make him an offer myself. For the last two years, everyone's been talking to me about him. Everyone talks; but he says nothing or else makes a joke. I see what it means. He's growing rich, he's absorbed in business, he has no thoughts for me. If I had money, were it ever so little, if I had only a hundred roubles, I'd throw everything up and go far away. I would go into a nunnery.

TROFIMOV: What bliss!

VARYA (*to* TROFIMOV): A student ought to have sense! (*In a soft tone with tears*) How ugly you've grown, Petya! How old you look! (*To* LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA, *no longer crying*) But I can't do without work, mamma; I must have something to do every minute.

(*Enter* YASHA.)

YASHA (*hardly restraining his laughter*): Epihodov has broken a billiard cue! (*Goes out.*)

VARYA: What is Epihodov doing here? Who gave him leave to play billiards? I can't make these people out (*goes out*).

LYUBOV: Don't tease her, Petya. You see she has grief enough without that.

TROFIMOV: She is so very officious, meddling in what's not her business. All the summer she's given Anya and me no peace. She's afraid of a love affair between us. What's it to do with her? Besides, I have given no grounds for it. Such triviality is not in my line. We are above love!

LYUBOV: And I suppose I am beneath love. (*Very uneasily*) Why is it Leonid's not here? If only I could know whether the estate is sold or not! It seems such an incredible calamity that I really don't know what to think. I am distracted . . . I shall scream in a minute . . . I shall do something stupid. Save me, Petya, tell me something, talk to me!

TROFIMOV: What does it matter whether the estate is sold today or not? That's all done with long ago. There's no turning back, the path is overgrown. Don't worry yourself, dear Lyubov Andreyevna. You mustn't deceive yourself; for once in your life you must face the truth!

LYUBOV: What truth? You see where the truth lies, but I seem to have lost my sight, I see nothing. You settle every great problem so boldly, but tell me, my dear boy, isn't it because you're young—because you haven't yet understood one of your problems through suffering? You look forward boldly, and isn't it that you don't see and don't expect anything dreadful because life is still hidden from your young eyes? You're bolder, more honest, deeper than we are, but think, be just a little magnanimous, have pity on me. I was born

here, you know, my father and mother lived here, my grandfather lived here, I love this house. I can't conceive of life without the cherry orchard, and if it really must be sold, then sell me with the orchard (*embraces* TROFIMOV, *kisses him on the forehead*). My boy was drowned here (*weeps*). Pity me, my dear kind fellow.

TROFIMOV: You know I feel for you with all my heart.

LYUBOV: But that should have been said differently, so differently (*takes out her handkerchief, telegram falls on the floor*). My heart is so heavy today. It's so noisy here, my soul is quivering at every sound, I'm shuddering all over, but I can't go away; I'm afraid to be quiet and alone. Don't be hard on me, Petya . . . I love you as though you were one of ourselves. I would gladly let you marry Anya—I swear I would—only, my dear boy, you must take your degree, you do nothing—you're simply tossed by fate from place to place. That's so strange. It is, isn't it? And you must do something with your beard to make it grow somehow (*laughs*). You look so funny!

TROFIMOV (*picks up the telegram*): I've no wish to be a beauty.

LYUBOV: That's a telegram from Paris. I get one every day. One yesterday and one today. That savage creature is ill again, he's in trouble again. He begs forgiveness, beseeches me to go, and really I ought to go to Paris to see him. You look shocked, Petya. What am I to do, my dear boy, what am I to do? He is ill, he is alone and unhappy, and who'll look after him, who'll keep him from doing the wrong thing, who'll give him his medicine at the right time? And why hide it or be silent? I love him, that's clear. I love him! I love him! He's a millstone about my neck, I'm going to the bottom with him, but I love that stone and can't live without it (*presses* TROFIMOV's *hand*). Don't think ill of me, Petya, don't tell me anything, don't tell me . . .

TROFIMOV (*through his tears*): For God's sake forgive my frankness: why, he robbed you!

LYUBOV: No! No! No! You mustn't speak like that (*covers her ears*).

TROFIMOV: He is a wretch! You're the only person that doesn't know it! He's a worthless creature! A despicable wretch!

LYUBOV (*getting angry, but speaking with restraint*): You're twenty-six or twenty-seven years old, but you're still a schoolboy.

TROFIMOV: Possibly.

LYUBOV: You should be a man at your age! You should understand what love means! And you ought to be in love yourself. You ought to fall in love! (*Angrily*) Yes, yes, and it's not purity in you, you're simply a prude, a comic fool, a freak.

TROFIMOV (*in horror*): The things she's saying!

LYUBOV: I am above love! You're not above love, but simply as our Firs here says, "You are a good-for-nothing." At your age not to have a mistress!

TROFIMOV (*in horror*): This is awful! The things she is saying! (*Goes rapidly into the larger drawing-room clutching his head*) This is awful! I can't stand it! I'm going. (*Goes off, but at once returns*) All is over between us! (*Goes off into the ante-room.*)

LYUBOV (*shouts after him*): Petya! Wait a minute! You funny creature! I was joking! Petya! (*There is a sound of somebody running quickly downstairs and suddenly falling with a crash.* ANYA *and* VARYA *scream, but there is a sound of laughter at once*).

LYUBOV: What has happened?

(ANYA *runs in.*)

ANYA (*laughing*): Petya's fallen downstairs! (*Runs out.*)

LYUBOV: What a queer fellow that Petya is!

(*The Station Master stands in the middle of the larger room and reads "The Magdalene," by Alexey Tolstoy. They listen to him, but before he has recited many lines strains of a waltz are heard from the ante-room and the reading is broken off. All dance.* TROFIMOV, ANYA, VARYA *and* LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA *come in from the ante-room.*)

LYUBOV: Come, Petya—come, pure heart! I beg your pardon. Let's have a dance! (*Dances with* PETYA.)

(ANYA *and* VARYA *dance.* FIRS *comes in, puts his stick down near the side door.* YASHA *also comes into the drawing-room and looks on at the dancing.*)

YASHA: What is it, old man?

FIRS: I don't feel well. In old days we used to have generals, barons and admirals dancing at our balls, and now we send for the post-office clerk and the station master and even they're not overanxious to come. I am getting feeble. The old master, the grandfather, used to give sealing-wax for all complaints. I have been taking sealing-wax for twenty years or more. Perhaps that's what's kept me alive.

YASHA: You bore me, old man! (*Yawns*) it's time you were done with.

FIRS: Ach, you're a good-for-nothing! (*Mutters.*)

(TROFIMOV *and* LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA *dance in larger room and then on to the stage*).

LYUBOV: *Merci.* I'll sit down a little (*sits down*). I'm tired.

(*Enter* ANYA.)

ANYA (*excitedly*): There's a man in the kitchen has been saying that the cherry orchard's been sold today.

LYUBOV: Sold to whom?

ANYA: He didn't say to whom. He's gone away.

(*She dances with* TROFIMOV, *and they go off into the larger room.*)

YASHA: There was an old man gossiping there, a stranger.

FIRS: Leonid Andreyevitch isn't here yet, he hasn't come back. He has his light overcoat on, *demi-saison*, he'll catch cold for sure. Ach! Foolish young things!

LYUBOV: I feel as though I should die. Go, Yasha, find out to whom it has been sold.

YASHA: But he went away long ago, the old chap (*laughs*).

LYUBOV (*with slight vexation*): What are you laughing at? What are you pleased at?

YASHA: Epihodov is so funny. He's a silly fellow, two and twenty misfortunes.

LYUBOV: Firs, if the estate is sold, where will you go?

FIRS: Where you bid me, there I'll go.

LYUBOV: Why do you look like that? Are you ill? You ought to be in bed.

FIRS: Yes (*ironically*). Me go to bed and who's to wait here? Who's to see to things without me? I'm the only one in all the house.

YASHA (*to* LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA): Lyubov Andreyevna, permit me to make a request of you; if you go back to Paris again, be so kind as to take me with you. It's positively impossible for me to stay here (*looking about him; in an undertone*). There's no need to say it, you see for yourself—an uncivilised country, the people have no morals, and then the dullness! The food in the kitchen's abominable, and then Firs runs after one muttering all sorts of unsuitable words. Take me with you, please do!

(*Enter* PISHTCHIK.)

PISHTCHIK: Allow me to ask you for a waltz, my dear lady. (LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA *goes with him*) Enchanting lady, I really must borrow of you just 180 roubles (*dances*), only 180 roubles. (*They pass into the larger room.*)

YASHA (*hums softly*): "Knowest thou my soul's emotion."

(*In the larger drawing-room, a figure in a gray top hat and in check trousers is gesticulating and jumping about.* Shouts of "Bravo, Charlotta Ivanovna.")

DUNYASHA (*she has stopped to powder herself*): My young lady tells me to dance. There are plenty of gentlemen, and too few ladies, but dancing makes me giddy and makes my heart beat. Firs, the post-office clerk said something to me just now that quite took my breath away.

(*Music becomes more subdued.*)

FIRS: What did he say to you?

DUNYASHA: He said I was like a flower.

YASHA (*yawns*): What ignorance! (*Goes out.*)

DUNYASHA: Like a flower. I am a girl of such delicate feelings, I am awfully fond of soft speeches.

FIRS: Your head's being turned.

(*Enter* EPIHODOV.)

EPIHODOV: You have no desire to see me, Dunyasha. I might be an insect (*sighs*). Ah! life!

DUNYASHA: What is it you want?

EPIHODOV: Undoubtedly you may be right (*sighs*). But of course, if one looks at it from that point of view, if I may so express myself, you have, excuse my plain speaking, reduced me to a complete state of mind. I know my destiny. Every day some misfortune befalls me and I have long ago grown accustomed to it, so that I look upon my fate with a smile. You gave me your word, and though I . . .

DUNYASHA: Let us have a talk later, I entreat you, but now leave me in peace, for I am lost in reverie (*plays with her fan*).

EPIHODOV: I have a misfortune every day, and if I may venture to express myself, I merely smile at it, I even laugh.

(VARYA *enters from the larger drawing-room.*)

VARYA: You still have not gone, Epihodov. What a disrespectful creature you are, really! (*To* DUNYASHA) Go along, Dunyasha! (*To* EPIHODOV) First you play billiards and break the cue, then you go wandering about the drawing-room like a visitor!

EPIHODOV: You really cannot, if I may so express myself, call me to account like this.

VARYA: I'm not calling you to account, I'm speaking to you: You do nothing but wander from place to place and don't do your work. We keep you as a counting-house clerk, but what use you are I can't say.

EPIHODOV (*offended*): Whether I work or whether I walk, whether I eat or whether I play billiards, is a matter to be judged by persons of understanding and my elders.

VARYA: You dare to tell me that! (*Firing up*) You dare! You mean to say I've no understanding. Begone from here! This minute!

EPIHODOV (*intimidated*): I beg you to express yourself with delicacy.

VARYA (*beside herself with anger*): This moment! get out! away! (*He goes towards the door, she following him*) Two and twenty misfortunes! Take yourself off! Don't let me set eyes on you!

(EPIHODOV *has gone out, behind the door his voice,* "I shall lodge a complaint against you") What! You're coming back? (*Snatches up the stick* FIRS *has put down near the door*) Come! Come! Come! I'll show you! What! you're coming? Then take that! (*She swings the stick, at the very moment that* LOPAHIN *comes in.*)

LOPAHIN: Very much obliged to you!

VARYA (*angrily and ironically*): I beg your pardon!

LOPAHIN: Not at all! I humbly thank you for your kind reception!

VARYA: No need of thanks for it. (*Moves away, then looks round and asks softly*) I haven't hurt you?

LOPAHIN: Oh, no! Not at all! There's an immense bump coming up, though!

VOICES FROM LARGER ROOM: Lopahin has come! Yermolay Alexeyevitch!

PISHTCHIK: What do I see and hear? (*Kisses* LOPAHIN) There's a whiff of cognac about you, my dear soul, and we're making merry here too!

(*Enter* LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA.)

LYUBOV: Is it you, Yermolay Alexeyevitch? Why have you been so long? Where's Leonid?

LOPAHIN: Leonid Andreyevitch arrived with me. He is coming.

LYUBOV (*in agitation*): Well! Well! Was there a sale? Speak!

LOPAHIN (*embarrassed, afraid of betraying his joy*): The sale was over at four o'clock. We missed our train—had to wait till half-past nine. (*Sighing heavily*) Ugh! I feel a little giddy.

(*Enter* GAEV. *In his right hand he has purchases, with his left hand he is wiping away his tears.*)

LYUBOV: Well, Leonid? What news? (*Impatiently, with tears*) Make haste, for God's sake!

GAEV (*makes her no answer, simply waves his hand. To* FIRS, *weeping*): Here, take them; there's anchovies, Kertch herrings. I have eaten nothing all day. What I have been through! (*Door into the*

billiard room is open. There is heard a knocking of balls and the voice of YASHA *saying* "Eighty-seven." GAEV'S *expression changes, he leaves off weeping*) I am fearfully tired. Firs, come and help me change my things (*goes to his own room across the larger drawing-room*).

PISHTCHIK: How about the sale? Tell us, do!

LYUBOV: Is the cherry orchard sold?

LOPAHIN: It is sold.

LYUBOV: Who has bought it?

LOPAHIN: I have bought it. (*A pause.* LYUBOV *is crushed; she would fall down if she were not standing near a chair and table.*)

(VARYA *takes keys from her waist-band, flings them on the floor in middle of drawing-room and goes out.*)

LOPAHIN: I have bought it! Wait a bit, ladies and gentlemen, pray. My head's a bit muddled, I can't speak (*laughs*). We came to the auction. Deriganov was there already. Leonid Andreyevitch only had 15,000 and Deriganov bid 30,000, besides the arrears, straight off. I saw how the land lay. I bid against him. I bid 40,000, he bid 45,000, I said 55, and so he went on, adding 5 thousands and I adding 10. Well . . . So it ended. I bid 90, and it was knocked down to me. Now the cherry orchard's mine! Mine! (*chuckles*) My God, the cherry orchard's mine! Tell me that I'm drunk, that I'm out of my mind, that it's all a dream (*stamps with his feet*). Don't laugh at me! If my father and my grandfather could rise from their graves and see all that has happened! How their Yermolay, ignorant, beaten Yermolay, who used to run about barefoot in winter, how that very Yermolay has bought the finest estate in the world! I have bought the estate where my father and grandfather were slaves, where they weren't even admitted into the kitchen. I am asleep, I am dreaming! It is all fancy, it is the work of your imagination plunged in the darkness of ignorance (*picks up keys, smiling fondly*). She threw away the keys; she means to show she's not the housewife now (*jingles the keys*). Well, no matter. (*The orchestra is heard tuning up*) Hey, musicians! Play! I want to hear you. Come, all of you, and look how Yermolay Lopahin will take the axe to the cherry orchard, how the trees will fall to the ground! We will build houses on it and our grandsons and great-grandsons will see a new life springing up there. Music! Play up!

(*Music begins to play.* LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA *has sunk into a chair and is weeping bitterly.*)

LOPAHIN (*reproachfully*): Why, why didn't you listen to me? My poor friend! Dear lady, there's no turning back now. (*With tears*) Oh, if all this could be over, oh, if our miserable disjointed life could somehow soon be changed!

PISHTCHIK (*takes him by the arm, in an undertone*): She's weeping, let us go and leave her alone. Come (*takes him by the arm and leads him into the larger drawing-room*).

LOPAHIN: What's that? Musicians, play up! All must be as I wish it. (*With irony*) Here comes the new master, the owner of the cherry orchard! (*Accidentally tips over a little table, almost upsetting the candelabra*) I can pay for everything! (*Goes out with* PISHTCHIK. *No one remains on the stage or in the larger drawing-room except* LYUBOV, *who sits huddled up, weeping bitterly. The music plays softly.* ANYA *and* TROFIMOV *come in quickly.* ANYA *goes up to her mother and falls on her knees before her.* TROFIMOV *stands at the entrance to the larger drawing-room*).

ANYA: Mamma! Mamma, you're crying, dear, kind, good mamma! My precious! I love you! I bless you! The cherry orchard is sold, it is gone, that's true, that's true! But don't weep, mamma! Life is still before you, you have still your good, pure heart! Let us go, let us go, darling, away from here! We will make a new garden, more splendid than this one; you will see it, you will understand. And joy, quiet, deep joy, will sink into your soul like the sun at evening! And you will smile, mamma! Come, darling, let us go!

(*The Curtain Falls.*)

Act Four

SCENE: *Same as in First Act. There are neither curtains on the windows nor pictures on the walls: only a little furniture remains piled up in a corner as if for sale. There is a sense of desolation; near the outer door and in the background of the scene are packed trunks, travelling bags, etc. On the left the door is open, and from here the voices of* VARYA *and* ANYA *are audible.* LOPAHIN *is standing waiting.* YASHA *is holding a tray with glasses full of champagne. In front of the stage* EPIHODOV *is tying up a box. In the background behind the scene a hum of talk from the peasants who have come to say good-bye. The voice of* GAEV: "Thanks, brothers, thanks!"

YASHA: The peasants have come to say good-bye. In my opinion, Yermolay Alexeyevitch, the peasants are good-natured, but they don't know much about things.

(*The hum of talk dies away. Enter across front of stage* LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA *and* GAEV. *She is not weeping, but is pale; her face is quivering—she cannot speak.*)

GAEV: You gave them your purse, Lyuba. That won't do—that won't do!

LYUBOV: I couldn't help it! I couldn't help it!

(*Both go out.*)

LOPAHIN (*in the doorway, calls after them*): You will take a glass at parting? Please do. I didn't think to bring any from the town, and at the station I could only get one bottle. Please take a glass. (*A pause*) What? You don't care for any? (*Comes away from the door*) If I'd known, I wouldn't have bought it. Well, and I'm not going to drink it. (YASHA *carefully sets the tray down on a chair*) You have a glass, Yasha, anyway.

YASHA: Good luck to the travellers, and luck to those that stay behind! (*Drinks*) This champagne isn't the real thing, I can assure you.

LOPAHIN: It cost eight roubles the bottle (*a pause*). It's devilish cold here.

YASHA: They haven't heated the stove today—it's all the same since we're going (*laughs*).

LOPAHIN: What are you laughing for?

YASHA: For pleasure.

LOPAHIN: Though it's October, it's as still and sunny as though it were summer. It's just right for building! (*Looks at his watch; says in doorway*) Take note, ladies and gentlemen, the train goes in forty-seven minutes; so you ought to start for the station in twenty minutes. You must hurry up!

(TROFIMOV *comes in from out of doors wearing a great-coat.*)

TROFIMOV: I think it must be time to start, the horses are ready. The devil only knows what's become of my goloshes; they're lost. (*In the doorway*) Anya! My goloshes aren't here. I can't find them.

LOPAHIN: And I'm getting off to Harkov. I am going in the same train with you. I'm spending all the winter at Harkov. I've been wasting all my time gossiping with you and fretting with no work to do. I can't get on without work. I don't know what to do with my hands, they flap about so queerly, as if they didn't belong to me.

TROFIMOV: Well, we're just going away, and you will take up your profitable labours again.

LOPAHIN: Do take a glass.

TROFIMOV: No, thanks.

LOPAHIN: Then you're going to Moscow now?

TROFIMOV: Yes. I shall see them as far as the town, and tomorrow I shall go on to Moscow.

LOPAHIN: Yes, I daresay, the professors aren't giving any lectures, they're waiting for your arrival.

TROFIMOV: That's not your business.

LOPAHIN: How many years have you been at the University?

TROFIMOV: Do think of something newer than that—that's stale and flat (*hunts for goloshes*). You know we shall most likely never see each other again, so let me give you one piece of advice at parting: don't wave your arms about—get out of the habit. And another thing, building villas, reckoning up that the summer visitors will in time become independent farmers—reckoning like that, that's not the thing to do either. After all, I am fond of you: you have fine delicate fingers like an artist, you've a fine delicate soul.

LOPAHIN (*embraces him*): Good-bye, my dear fellow. Thanks for everything. Let me give you money for the journey, if you need it.

TROFIMOV: What for? I don't need it.

LOPAHIN: Why, you haven't got a halfpenny.

TROFIMOV: Yes, I have, thank you. I got some money for a translation. Here it is in my pocket, (*anxiously*) but where can my goloshes be!

VARYA (*from the next room*): Take the nasty things! (*Flings a pair of goloshes onto the stage.*)

TROFIMOV: Why are you so cross, Varya? h'm! . . . but those aren't my goloshes.

LOPAHIN: I sowed three thousand acres with poppies in the spring, and now I have cleared forty thousand profit. And when my poppies were in flower, wasn't it a picture! So here, as I say, I made forty thousand, and I'm offering you a loan because I can afford to. Why turn up your nose? I am a peasant—I speak bluntly.

TROFIMOV: Your father was a peasant, mine was a chemist—and that proves absolutely nothing whatever. (LOPAHIN *takes out his pocket-book*) Stop that—stop that. If you were to offer me two hundred thousand I wouldn't take it. I am an independent man, and everything that all of you, rich and poor alike, prize so highly and hold so dear, hasn't the slightest power over me—it's like so much fluff fluttering in the air. I can get on without you. I can pass by you. I am strong and proud. Humanity is advancing towards the highest truth, the highest happiness, which is possible on earth, and I am in the front ranks.

LOPAHIN: Will you get there?

TROFIMOV: I shall get there (*a pause*). I shall get there, or I shall show others the way to get there.

(*In the distance is heard the stroke of an axe on a tree.*)

LOPAHIN: Good-bye, my dear fellow; it's time to be off. We turn up our noses at one another, but life is passing all the while. When I am working hard without resting, then my mind is more at ease, and it seems to me as though I too know what I exist for; but how many people there are in Russia, my dear boy, who exist, one doesn't know what for. Well, it doesn't matter. That's not what keeps things spinning. They tell me Leonid Andreyevitch has taken a situation. He is going to be a clerk at the bank—6,000 roubles a year. Only, of course, he won't stick to it—he's too lazy.

ANYA (*in doorway*): Mamma begs you not to let them chop down the orchard until she's gone.

TROFIMOV: Yes, really, you might have the tact (*walks out across the front of the stage*).

LOPAHIN: I'll see to it! I'll see to it! Stupid fellows! (*Goes out after him.*)

ANYA: Has Firs been taken to the hospital?

YASHA: I told them this morning. No doubt they have taken him.

ANYA (*to* EPIHODOV, *who passes across the drawing-room*): Semyon Pantaleyevitch, inquire, please, if Firs has been taken to the hospital.

YASHA (*in a tone of offense*): I told Yegor this morning—why ask a dozen times?

EPIHODOV: Firs is advanced in years. It's my conclusive opinion no treatment would do him good; it's time he was gathered to his fathers. And I can only envy him (*puts a trunk down on a cardboard hat-box and crushes it*). There now, of course—I knew it would be so.

YASHA (*jeeringly*): Two and twenty misfortunes!

VARYA (*through the door*): Has Firs been taken to the hospital?

ANYA: Yes.

VARYA: Why wasn't the note for the doctor taken too?

ANYA: Oh, then, we must send it after them (*goes out*).

VARYA (*from the adjoining room*): Where's Yasha? Tell him his mother's come to say good-bye to him.

YASHA (*waves his hand*): They put me out of all patience!

(DUNYASHA *has all this time been busy about the luggage. Now, when* YASHA *is left alone, she goes up to him*).

DUNYASHA: You might just give me one look, Yasha. You're going away. You're leaving me (*weeps and throws herself on his neck*).

YASHA: What are you crying for? (*Drinks the champagne*) In six days I shall be in Paris again. Tomorrow we shall get into the express train and roll away in a flash. I can scarcely believe it! *Vive la France!* It doesn't suit me here—it's not the life for me; there's no doing anything. I have seen enough of the ignorance here. I have had enough of it (*drinks champagne*). What are you crying for? Behave yourself properly, and then you won't cry.

DUNYASHA (*powders her face, looking in a pocket-mirror*): Do send me a letter from Paris. You know how I loved you, Yasha—how I loved you! I am a tender creature, Yasha.

YASHA: Here they are coming! (*Busies himself about the trunks, humming softly. Enter* LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA, GAEV, ANYA *and* CHARLOTTA IVANOVNA.)

GAEV: We ought to be off. There's not much time now (*looking at* YASHA). What a smell of herrings!

LYUBOV: In ten minutes we must get into the carriage (*casts a look about the room*). Farewell, dear house, dear old home of our fathers! Winter will pass and spring will come, and then you will be no more; they will tear you down! How much those walls have seen! (*Kisses her daughter passionately*) My treasure, how bright you look! Your eyes are sparkling like diamonds! Are you glad? Very glad?

ANYA: Very glad! A new life is beginning, mamma.

GAEV: Yes, really, everything is all right now. Before the cherry orchard was sold, we were all worried and wretched, but afterwards, when once the question was settled conclusively, irrevocably, we all felt calm and even cheerful. I am a bank clerk now—I am a financier—cannon off the red. And you, Lyuba, after all, you are looking better; there's no question of that.

LYUBOV: Yes. My nerves are better, that's true. (*Her hat and coat are handed to her*) I'm sleeping well. Carry out my things, Yasha. It's time. (*To* ANYA) My darling, we shall soon see each other again. I am going to Paris. I can live there on the money your Yaroslavl auntie sent us to buy the estate with—hurrah for auntie!—but that money won't last long.

ANYA: You'll come back soon, mamma, won't you? I'll be working up for my examination in the high school, and when I have passed that, I shall set to work and be a help to you. We will read all sorts of things together, mamma, won't we? (*Kisses her mother's hands*) We will read in the autumn evenings. We'll read lots of books, and a new wonderful world will open out before us (*dreamily*). Mamma, come soon.

LYUBOV: I shall come, my precious treasure (*embraces her*).

(*Enter* LOPAHIN. CHARLOTTA *softly hums a song.*)

GAEV: Charlotta's happy; she's singing!

CHARLOTTA (*picks up a bundle like a swaddled baby*): Bye, bye, my baby. (*A baby is heard crying: "Ooah! ooah!"*) Hush, hush, my pretty boy! (*Ooah! ooah!*) Poor little thing! (*Throws the bundle back*) You must please find me a situation. I can't go on like this.

LOPAHIN: We'll find you one, Charlotta Ivanovna. Don't you worry yourself.

GAEV: Everyone's leaving us. Varya's going away. We have become of no use all at once.

CHARLOTTA: There's nowhere for me to be in the town. I must go away. (*Hums*) What care I . . .

(*Enter* PISHTCHIK.)

LOPAHIN: The freak of nature!

PISHTCHIK (*gasping*): Oh! . . . let me get my breath. . . . I'm worn out . . . my most honoured . . . Give me some water.

GAEV: Want some money, I suppose? Your humble servant! I'll go out of the way of temptation (*goes out*).

PISHTCHIK: It's a long while since I have been to see you . . . dearest lady. (*To* LOPAHIN) You are here . . . glad to see you . . . a man of immense intellect . . . take . . . here (*gives* LOPAHIN) 400 roubles. That leaves me owing 840.

LOPAHIN (*shrugging his shoulders in amazement*): It's like a dream. Where did you get it?

PISHTCHIK: Wait a bit . . . I'm hot . . . a most extraordinary occurrence! Some Englishmen came along and found in my land some sort of white clay. (*To* LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA) And 400 for you . . . most lovely . . . wonderful (*gives money*). The rest later (*sips water*). A young man in the train was telling me just now that a great philosopher advises jumping off a house-top. "Jump!" says he; "the whole gist of the problem lies in that." (*Wonderingly*) Fancy that, now! Water, please!

LOPAHIN: What Englishmen?

PISHTCHIK: I have made over to them the rights to dig the clay for twenty-four years . . . and now, excuse me . . . I can't stay . . . I must be trotting on. I'm going to Znoikovo . . . to Kardamanovo. . . . I'm in debt all round (*sips*) . . . To your very good health! . . . I'll come in on Thursday.

LYUBOV: We are just off to the town, and tomorrow I start for abroad.

PISHTCHIK: What! (*In agitation*) Why to the town? Oh, I see the furniture . . . the boxes. No matter . . . (*through his tears*) . . . no matter . . . men of enormous intellect . . . these Englishmen. . . . Never mind . . . be happy. God will succour you . . . no matter . . . everything in this world must have an end (*kisses* LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA'S *hand*). If the rumour reaches you that my end has come, think of this . . . old horse, and say: "There once was such a man in the world . . . Semyonov-Pishtchik . . . the Kingdom of Heaven be his!" . . . most extraordinary weather . . . yes. (*Goes out in violent agitation, but at once returns and says in the doorway*) Dashenka wishes to be remembered to you (*goes out*).

LYUBOV: Now we can start. I leave with two cares in my heart. The first is leaving Firs ill. (*Looking at her watch*) We still have five minutes.

ANYA: Mamma, Firs has been taken to the hospital. Yasha sent him off this morning.

LYUBOV: My other anxiety is Varya. She is used to getting up early and working; and now, without work, she's like a fish out of water. She is thin and pale, and she's crying, poor dear! (*A pause*) You are well aware, Yermolay Alexeyevitch, I dreamed of marrying her to you, and everything seemed to show that you would get married (*whispers to* ANYA *and motions to* CHARLOTTA *and both go out*). She loves you—she suits you. And I don't know—I don't know why it is you seem, as it were, to avoid each other. I can't understand it!

LOPAHIN: I don't understand it myself, I confess. It's queer somehow, altogether. If there's still time, I'm ready now at once. Let's settle it straight off, and go ahead; but without you, I feel I shan't make her an offer.

LYUBOV: That's excellent. Why, a single moment's all that's necessary. I'll call her at once.

LOPAHIN: And there's champagne all ready too (*looking into the glasses*). Empty! Someone's emptied them already. (YASHA *coughs*) I call that greedy.

LYUBOV (*eagerly*): Capital! We will go out. Yasha, *allez!* I'll call her in. (*At the door*) Varya, leave all that; come here. Come along! (*Goes out with* YASHA.)

LOPAHIN (*looking at his watch*): Yes.

(*A pause. Behind the door, smothered laughter and whispering, and, at last, enter* VARYA.)

VARYA (*looking a long while over the things*): It is strange, I can't find it anywhere.

LOPAHIN: What are you looking for?

VARYA: I packed it myself, and I can't remember (*a pause*).

LOPAHIN: Where are you going now, Varvara Mihailova?

VARYA: I? To the Ragulins. I have arranged to go to them to look after the house—as a housekeeper.

LOPAHIN: That's in Yashnovo? It'll be seventy miles away (*a pause*). So this is the end of life in this house!

VARYA (*looking among the things*): Where is it? Perhaps I put it in the trunk. Yes, life in this house is over—there will be no more of it.

LOPAHIN: And I'm just off to Harkov—by this next train. I've a lot of business there. I'm leaving Epihodov here, and I've taken him on.

VARYA: Really!

LOPAHIN: This time last year we had snow already, if you remember; but now it's so fine and sunny. Though it's cold, to be sure—three degrees of frost.

VARYA: I haven't looked (*a pause*). And besides, our thermometer's broken (*a pause*).

(*Voice at the door from the yard:* Yermolay Alexeyevitch!")

LOPAHIN (*as though he had long been expecting this summons*): This minute!

(LOPAHIN *goes out quickly.* VARYA *sitting on the floor and laying her head on a bag full of clothes, sobs quietly. The door opens.* LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA *comes in cautiously.*)

LYUBOV: Well? (*A pause*) We must be going.

VARYA (*has wiped her eyes and is no longer crying*): Yes, mamma, it's time to start. I shall have time to get to the Ragulins today, if only you're not late for the train.

LYUBOV (*in the doorway*): Anya, put your things on.

(*Enter* ANYA, *then* GAEV *and* CHARLOTTA IVANOVNA. GAEV *has on a warm coat with a hood. Servants and cabmen come in.* EPIHODOV *bustles about the luggage.*)

LYUBOV: Now we can start on our travels.

ANYA (*joyfully*): On our travels!

GAEV: My friends—my dear, my precious friends! Leaving this house for ever, can I be silent? Can I refrain from giving utterance at leave-taking to those emotions which now flood all my being?

ANYA (*supplicatingly*): Uncle!

VARYA: Uncle, you mustn't!

GAEV (*dejectedly*): Cannon and into the pocket . . . I'll be quiet. . .

(*Enter* TROFIMOV *and afterwards* LOPAHIN.)

TROFIMOV: Well, ladies and gentlemen, we must start.

LOPAHIN: Epihodov, my coat!

LYUBOV: I'll stay just one minute. It seems as though I have never seen before what the walls, what the ceilings in this house were like, and now I look at them with greediness, with such tender love.

GAEV: I remember when I was six years old sitting in that window on Trinity Day watching my father going to church.

LYUBOV: Have all the things been taken?

LOPAHIN: I think all. (*Putting on overcoat, to* EPIHODOV) You, Epihodov, mind you see everything is right.

EPIHODOV (*in a husky voice*): Don't you trouble, Yermolay Alexeyevitch.

LOPAHIN: Why, what's wrong with your voice?

EPIHODOV: I've just had a drink of water, and I choked over something.

YASHA (*contemptuously*): The ignorance!

LYUBOV: We are going—and not a soul will be left here.

LOPAHIN: Not till the spring.

VARYA (*pulls a parasol out of a bundle, as though about to hit someone with it.* LOPAHIN *makes a gesture as though alarmed*): What is it? I didn't mean anything.

TROFIMOV: Ladies and gentlemen, let us get into the carriage. It's time. The train will be in directly.

VARYA: Petya, here they are, your goloshes, by that box. (*With tears*) And what dirty old things they are!

TROFIMOV (*putting on his goloshes*): Let us go, friends!

GAEV (*greatly agitated, afraid of weeping*): The train—the station! Double baulk, ah!

LYUBOV: Let us go!

LOPAHIN: Are we all here? (*Locks the side-door on left*) The things are all here. We must lock up. Let us go!

ANYA: Good-bye, home! Good-bye to the old life!

TROFIMOV: Welcome to the new life!

(TROFIMOV *goes out with* ANYA. VARYA *looks round the room and goes out slowly.* YASHA *and* CHARLOTTA IVANOVNA, *with her dog, go out.*)

LOPAHIN: Till the spring, then! Come, friends, till we meet! (*Goes out.*)

(LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA *and* GAEV *remain alone. As though they had been waiting for this, they throw themselves on each other's necks, and break into subdued smothered sobbing, afraid of being overheard.*)

GAEV (*in despair*): Sister, my sister!

LYUBOV: Oh, my orchard!—my sweet, beautiful orchard! My life, my youth, my happiness, good-bye! good-bye!

VOICE OF ANYA (*calling gaily*): Mamma!

VOICE OF TROFIMOV (*gaily, excitedly*): Aa—oo!

LYUBOV: One last look at the walls, at the windows. My dear mother loved to walk about this room.

GAEV: Sister, sister!

VOICE OF ANYA: Mamma!

VOICE OF TROFIMOV: Aa—oo!

LYUBOV: We are coming. (*They go out.*)

(*The stage is empty. There is the sound of the doors being locked up, then of the carriages driving away. There is silence. In the stillness there is the dull stroke of an axe in a tree, clanging with a mournful lonely sound. Footsteps are heard.* FIRS *appears in the doorway on the right. He is dressed as always—in a pea-jacket and white waistcoat, with slippers on his feet. He is ill.*)

FIRS (*goes up to the doors, and tries the handles*): Locked! They have gone . . . (*sits down on sofa*). They have forgotten me. . . . Never mind . . . I'll sit here a bit. . . . I'll be bound Leonid Andreyevitch hasn't put his fur coat on and has gone off in his thin overcoat (*sighs anxiously*). I didn't see after him. . . . These young people . . . (*mutters something that can't be distinguished*). Life has slipped by as though I hadn't lived. (*Lies down*) I'll lie down a bit. . . . There's no strength in you, nothing left you—all gone! Ech! I'm good for nothing (*lies motionless*).

(*A sound is heard that seems to come from the sky, like a breaking harp-string, dying away mournfully. All is still again, and there is heard nothing but the strokes of the axe far away in the orchard.*)

(*The Curtain Falls.*)

Both *Arms and the Man* and *The Cherry Orchard* are concerned with the breakdown of late nineteenth-century culture and the growth of a mercantilistic society in eastern Europe. But the similarity seems to end there. Shaw uses the clashing ways of life to dramatize his own philosophical point of view. He leaves little doubt that Bluntschli is the Shavian spokesman. The answer to the question "Who speaks for Chekhov?" is by no means so simple. Nor is Chekhov, unlike Ibsen, interested primarily in assessing sociological causes or drawing moral conclusions about life. Reading Shaw and Ibsen, we feel that the dramatists were firmly convinced of the right answers to the problems they were presenting, even if their characters frequently were not. In Chekhov there is no sense of confident assurance. The world he creates is so psychologically complex and profound that one wonders if there *are* any final answers. If there are, Chekhov makes no claims to knowing them, but instead seems simply to say, "This is what it feels like to live in this kind of world; this is the way people are." Although *The Cherry Orchard* deals with the same fundamental conflict between illusion and reality that is dramatized in *The Wild Duck* and *Arms and the Man,* Chekhov does not say, as Ibsen does. "Some people must have illusions to live at all in our modern world,"

nor does he take Shaw's diametrically opposed thesis "Illusions are romantic nonsense and should be dispensed with."

Nor does Chekhov use plot for Shavian comic intrigue or for Ibsen's character-entanglements and theatrical suspense. It is difficult to define the plot conflict in *The Cherry Orchard*. Virtually no suspense is created. The answer to the question "Will the cherry orchard be sold?" is obviously "Yes." Mme Ranevsky and Gaev absolutely refuse to consider the only possible solution, proposed by Lopahin. "What rot!" exclaims Gaev indignantly (p. 639), and Mme Ranevsky considers villas and summer visitors "so vulgar" (p. 652). Indeed they accept the sale as inevitable when in the first act (p. 642) Gaev says, ". . . and the orchard will be sold to pay our debts; it seems strange . . . ." Nor are the love affairs getting anywhere at all. Lopahin simply refuses to the very end to pop the long awaited question to Varya. Trofimov repeatedly announces, "We are above love" (pp. 659 and 665). Dunyasha, whom Epihodov wants to marry, confesses that she is passionately in love with Yasha, but he retorts, ". . . if a girl loves anyone, that means that she has no principles" (p. 650). Francis Fergusson defines Chekhov's plot-technique as a selection of ". . . only those incidents, those moments in his characters' lives, between their rationalized efforts, when they sense their situation and destiny most directly. So he contrives to show the action of the play as a whole — the unsuccessful attempt to cling to the Cherry Orchard — in many diverse reflectors and without propounding any thesis about it."[1]

Chekhov implies that the self-absorption and impracticality of the old order, symbolized by the cherry orchard, have doomed it to destruction in the face of cultural and economic changes that the aristocracy can no longer cope with. Trapped in the decaying way of life that produced them, the charming Mme Ranevsky and the utterly impractical Gaev hope that the impossible will occur to save them: "If we could only come in for a legacy from somebody, or marry our Anya to a very rich man, or we might go to Yaroslavl and try our luck with our old aunt, the Countess" (p. 644). Yet they both realize that these dreams are merely wishful thinking, and so they passively await the inevitable.

The structural unity of *The Cherry Orchard* is stronger and more significant than that of the conventionally realistic narrative plot. The play is a drama of conflicting attitudes toward the central symbol, the cherry orchard. "Each character," as Fergusson says, "sees some value in it — economic, sentimental, social, cultural — which he wishes to keep."[2] Hence the orchard is not simply a piece

[1] Francis Fergusson, *The Idea of a Theater* (Princeton, 1949), p. 175.
[2] Fergusson, p. 176.

of property around which cluster nostalgic memories; it is a symbol of various ways of life. As the focal center of the play, it brings into coherence the sharp split between the old attitudes toward life, primarily cultural and sentimental, and the new economic and social values replacing them. The play opens with the new order, best seen in Lopahin. He is acutely aware of his peasant upbringing and his newly acquired position as a wealthy merchant, yet "for all my money, come to think, a peasant I was, and a peasant I am" (p. 629). Later he points out the recent change in the class structure of this society, and optimistically predicts a future in which villa residents will prosperously cultivate their small plots of land. The housemaid Dunyasha is also affecting upper-class ways. Lopahin chides her for dressing above her station in life. She puts on the grand act of a refined and sensitive lady whenever the occasion presents itself, as, for example, when she flutters, "Ah, I shall drop," until she realizes that Lopahin has gone to greet Mme Ranevsky and will not catch her if she collapses. Firs, on the other hand, reminisces in a world of his own about his life as head footman before the emancipation, which he calls "the calamity."

The clashing ways of life in a changing society, first dramatized by the contrast between Firs on the one hand and Lopahin and Dunyasha on the other, can be illustrated by all the characters. Yasha and Trofimov are also members of the new order. Yasha, who repudiates his mother, begs Mme Ranevsky to take him back to the gaiety of Paris because he cannot tolerate the dullness and barbarism of Russian society. Trofimov is shocked at the brutal treatment the serfs received and summarizes his position clearly (p. 659): "We are at least two hundred years behind, we have really gained nothing yet, we have no definite attitude to the past, we do nothing but theorize or complain of depression or drink vodka. It is clear that to begin to live in the present we must first expiate our past, we must break with it . . . ." In addition to Firs, Mme Ranevsky and her brother Gaev, of course, best represent the old order now in decay. Dreaming of a dead past, both are incapable of positive action to prevent the destruction of the last remnants of their life. Gaev calls himself a man of the eighties and maintains *noblesse oblige* as his standard of political conduct. Nor can Varya face the world realistically; she dreams of marrying Anya off to some rich man so that she may travel blissfully through Russia, visiting holy shrines. Pishtchik can do nothing but hope that miracles will continue to save him from ruin. Epihodov cannot decide whether to live or to shoot himself, and so carries a revolver around with him to be ready for any contingency. Anya is the only hope of this decadent society, for she has confidence in the future.

On page 660 she says to Trofimov, "The house we live in has long ceased to be our own, and I shall leave it, I give you my word," and in Act Four she tells her mother that she is very happy because a new life is beginning for them.

It would grossly distort the subtle fabric of Chekhov's play to suggest that the cleavage between old and new is as sharply etched as it is for comic purposes in *Arms and the Man* or that the characters are the precisely delineated types found in *The Wild Duck*. Because *The Cherry Orchard* is a play of delicate shadings and nuances of mood, not a drama of ideas, Chekhov has not hesitated to sacrifice realism in order to focus attention on atmosphere. Note, for example, his symbolic stage direction on page 657: "Suddenly there is a sound in the distance, as it were from the sky – the sound of a breaking harp-string, mournfully dying away."

The complex and ambivalent moods are quickly established by Mme Ranevsky's arrival home. Her first line is spoken "joyfully, through her tears" (p. 631). Throughout, characters laugh and weep simultaneously. But it is important not to overlook the subtitle: *A Comedy in Four Acts*. Chekhov himself, upset when the Moscow Art Theater emphasized the tragic, wrote the director's wife, Mme Stanislavsky, that *The Cherry Orchard* was "not a drama, but a comedy, sometimes even a farce . . . . The last act is gay, the whole play is gay, light." Epihodov's entrance on page 630, for instance, is burlesqued: he comes squeaking noisily into the room, dropping his nosegay as he does so. He finds his misfortunes "positively remarkable" and triumphantly proves his point by accidentally crashing into a chair. Many stage directions are sheer vaudeville. Mme Ranevsky's grand entrance is straight out of the circus. With tremendous furor she and her entourage come parading onto the stage complete with luggage, parcels, umbrella, and dog. Charlotta's first remark to Pishtchik – "My dog eats nuts, too" – continues the comic tone, as does the cordial greeting Yasha gives Dunyasha. Lopahin's "moo" shatters the pathos that is beginning to develop in the first act. His way of making love is pure farce. Pishtchik's falling asleep and snoring in the middle of his remarks, his gulping down all of Mme Ranevsky's pills with a swallow of beer, and Gaev's big dramatic speech in honor of the centennial of the bookcase are just three more ways of establishing the comedy of Act One.

On the other hand, the tears must not be overlooked. Sentimental as she may seem, Mme Ranevsky is genuinely glad to return to her home. Her homesickness has been acute. Firs is deeply moved that he may again serve his beloved mistress before he dies. The first indication of a serious turn to Act One comes with Lopahin's announcement that the date of the sale of the orchard has been

fixed. Later, as Varya, Mme Ranevsky, and Gaev look out upon the orchard in full bloom, the vague, romantic atmosphere and their nostalgia and sentimentality make for quiet melancholy. Trofimov's entrance adds a note of pathos because he reminds them all of the untimely death of little Grisha. The act draws to a close at a slow, drowsy pace.

The second act begins with a tone of quiet meditation, which is given an amusing twist when Charlotta begins to munch on her cucumber. The self-centeredness of the characters is clearly seen here, for all the conversations are soliloquies. The people seem to talk in parallel lines, never getting their discussions onto the same topic or paying the slightest attention to what anyone else is saying. Such a tendency was earlier dramatized by the deaf Firs, whose answers are usually far afield of the topic under discussion (p. 637):

MADAME RANEVSKY: I'm so glad to find you still alive.
FIRS: The day before yesterday.

Act Two moves toward a more melancholy ending with the distant sound of the breaking harp-string. The long silences are a particularly effective contribution to this mood. The same atmosphere found at the end of Act One is again achieved here, as indeed it is in the final moments of each act. The comedy is played down, and a calm, pensive mood is achieved with Epihodov's playing some mournful song on his guitar as the moon rises over the horizon. Against this setting of quiet romantic beauty, Trofimov sees happiness only as an ideal.

In the beginning of Act Three the mood shifts again to the comic. The fact that Mme Ranevsky picks the day of the sale to hold her dance shows how little she really understands what is happening to her way of life. At first the sale is treated very casually. Anya announces that somebody in the kitchen has said the cherry orchard has been sold, but she has forgotten to ask to whom; and then she blithely dances out of the room. When Gaev comes in, he is interested only in his anchovies and Kertch herrings, and he departs without having replied to his sister's impatient pleadings. (Point out in this act the techniques of burlesque encountered early in Act One.) Charlotta's magic and ventriloquist acts, the station-master's interrupted recitation of a poem by Tolstoy, and, most important, the background music and dancing all contribute to the gaiety and pleasant excitement. With the crushing realization that Lopahin has bought the orchard, Mme Ranevsky nearly collapses with grief. The dance music from the drawing room plays softly in ironic counterpoint to her bitter weeping as Anya naively and poignantly consoles her mother.

In Act Four comedy is played down but not eliminated, for Epihodov, true to form, manages to crush a bandbox, Yasha downs the entire supply of champagne, and Lopahin squirms out of a marital trap carefully laid by Mme Ranevsky. Also significant is the fact that both Gaev and his sister admit that, now their fate has irrevocably been decided, they are much calmer and happier. The audience feels genuine regret at their sorrow and defeat — an attitude made even more intense by the highly effective and symbolic curtain scene. The cold, dark, empty stage picks up the lonely echoes of the axe and the mournful sound of the breaking harpstring as the old order makes way for the new. Forgotten because of the bungling of those to whom he is most devoted, Firs, too, prepares for the future.

Although Chekhov's attitude is one of pity and regret over the Russian character and his country's social and economic changes, he is still coolly objective in his portrayal of character. Consequently, the failings of each person are exploited and laughed at good-naturedly. Even Trofimov, who does say some things that Chekhov would probably agree with, tends at times to be a caricature. His rhetorical outbursts on the doctrine of work cannot be taken too seriously because the man has never worked in his life, whereas his theory on man with a hundred senses is utter nonsense. Lopahin, the practical businessman, with his comic "moo" and his terror of matrimony, is also laughed at. Absorbed in themselves, unable to fit into the practical world, the muddled, silly, good-humored aristocrats both irritate and amuse us. They are ridiculous people with highly romantic egos and extremely volatile moods. Gaev, with his billiard routine and candy-munching, is just one example. His love for the histrionic leads him into some absurd performances, such as his declamation on nature and his final farewell to the old homestead. Yet he nevertheless engages our affections because he, like Mme Ranevsky, is aware of his foibles. He admits with embarrassment the stupidity of his speech over a bookcase. Chekhov does, however, show a sympathetic understanding of his characters' problems. Even Trofimov succumbs when Mme Ranevsky entreats, ". . . have pity on me. I was born here, you know, my father and mother lived here, my grandfather lived here, I love this house. I can't conceive of life without the cherry orchard . . ." (pp. 665-666).

What life without the cherry orchard will be, Chekhov does not say, for the action of his drama is complete. All efforts to save the orchard have been doomed to failure from the beginning, and the characters arrive only to depart. Have they learned from suffering? Have they come to a new awareness of themselves, or their

society, or their future, recognizing their responsibility for the fate that has befallen them? Like all great art, *The Cherry Orchard* provides only "hints and guesses, hints followed by guesses"; the rest is hidden in the inscrutable silences that pervade Chekhov's masterpiece.

QUESTIONS

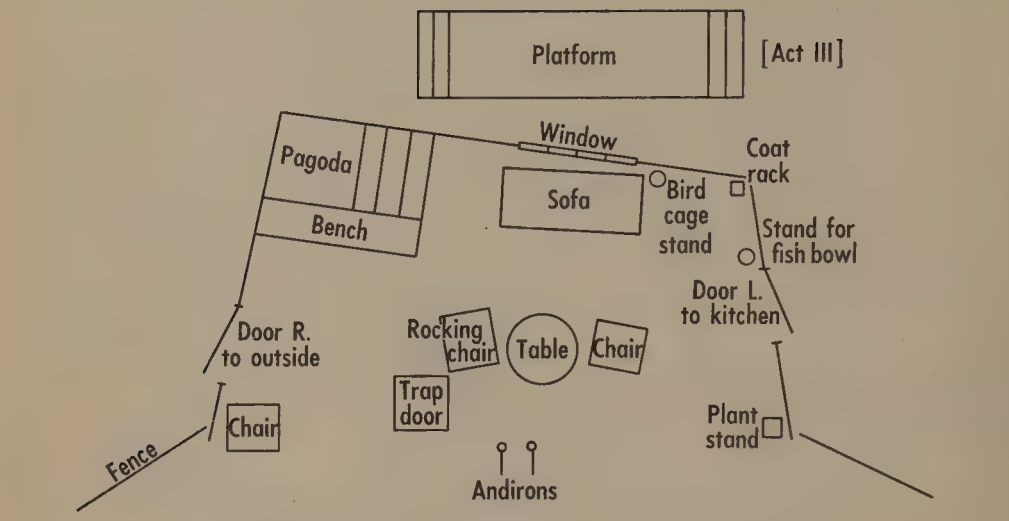
1. What are some of Gaev's characteristic mannerisms and speeches? Show how they help to reveal his character and contribute to the tone.
2. What make-up should Trofimov wear? How would you costume the characters?
3. How do the props of the cucumber and the revolver and the pace at the opening of Act Two contribute to the mood?
4. The characters in *The Cherry Orchard* are extraordinarily aware of words, voices, and talking. Trace this poetic motif from the final moments of Act One (p. 645) through Act Two. What is Chekhov suggesting by this almost metaphorical pattern of language?
5. Since Chekhov leaves the arrangement of the set in Act Three almost completely up to the director, how would you set up the stage for this act? Draw a set of ground plans for the act.
6. Chekhov often presents moments of great emotion indirectly through the exchange of trivia and irrelevant small talk. Analyze the final conversation between Lopahin and Varya as one example. What other similar situations are there in the play?
7. Take any minor character, such as Yasha, and discuss (1) what he contributes to the play; and (2) how you would play the part, particularly when you have nothing to say.
8. It has been suggested that the structure of each act has been built on some sort of social ceremony. What are they? What is Chekhov's artistic purpose in making use of such an organization? How does the structure of *The Glass Menagerie* bear a resemblance to that of *The Cherry Orchard*? Why is it appropriate that it should?
9. Analyze in detail the pace and tempo of each act of *The Cherry Orchard,* accounting for all significant changes.
10. Evaluate in detail the final moments of the play, beginning with Lyubov and Gaev's farewell, as an example of Chekhov's brilliantly concentrated use of symbol, pace, character, setting, dialogue, and tone. How does the family's failure to remember Firs bring to a final focus our ambivalent attitude toward them? Why is it dramatically appropriate that the old retainer should be left behind, alone and forgotten? Does he die?
11. William Inge said he believed *Come Back, Little Sheba* "might have something in common, in character, with the terrifying but still humorous comedies of O'Casey, maybe with those of Chekhov." One

of Inge's critics called *Come Back, Little Sheba* "a Missouri *Cherry Orchard.*" Is it? What are the qualities of tone, if any, which *Sheba, Juno,* and *The Cherry Orchard* have in common? In what ways are these qualities similarly created? Why do O'Casey and Chekhov seem more successful?

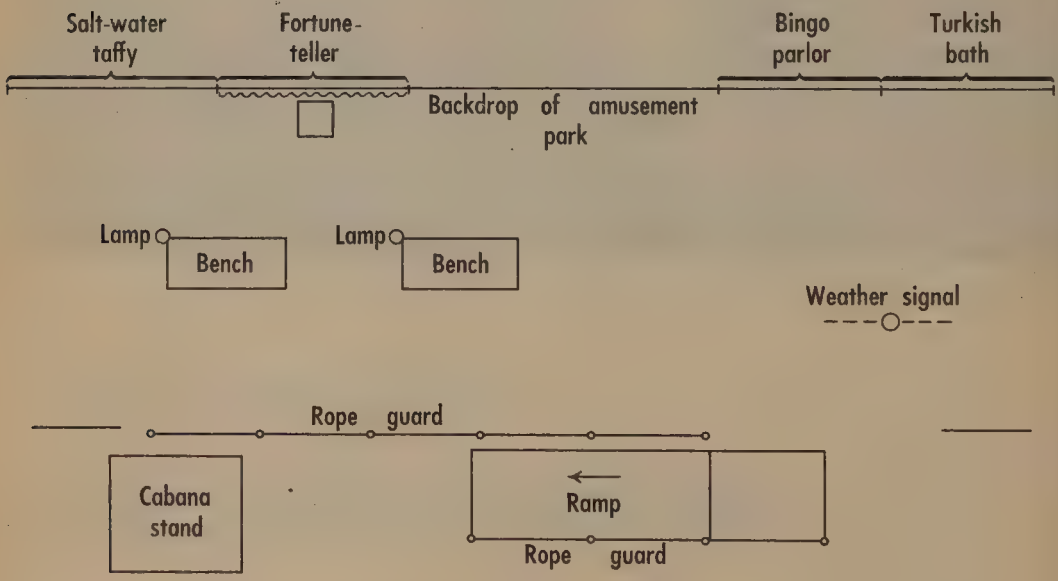
12. Lola in *Sheba,* Amanda in *The Glass Menagerie,* and Mme Ranevsky all long for an idealized, dream-like past. Describe these vanished worlds. Compare and contrast the characters of the women.
13. *Come Back, Little Sheba, The Wild Duck, The Glass Menagerie,* and *The Cherry Orchard* have titles which call attention to the central symbol of each play. What dramatic advantages are gained by using such organizing symbols? Do these symbols have any meanings in common? What is unique about each?

THORNTON WILDER

THE SKIN OF OUR TEETH



THE SKIN OF OUR TEETH • ACTS I AND III



THE SKIN OF OUR TEETH • ACT II

THORNTON WILDER

THORNTON NIVEN WILDER, three times winner of the Pulitzer Prize and an outstanding figure in contemporary American letters as both novelist and playwright, was born in Madison, Wisconsin, on April 17, 1897. After living with his family in China for several years, he attended Oberlin College and in 1917 entered Yale as a junior. Returning to Yale after serving a year in the Coast Artillery Corps in World War I, Wilder attracted attention as an able young playwright; several of his one-act plays written at Yale were later published. After graduating in 1920, he spent a year abroad studying archaeology at the American Academy in Rome and then returned to undertake further graduate work at Princeton and to teach at the Lawrenceville School. Later he spent six years as a member of the English staff at the University of Chicago.

With the publication of his second novel, *The Bridge of San Luis Rey,* a 1928 Pulitzer Prize winner, Wilder achieved merited recognition here and abroad. His success as a playwright, however, came much later with *Our Town,* produced on Broadway in 1938. This experimental drama, staged without scenery, won him another Pulitzer Prize, as did his controversial *The Skin of Our Teeth* in 1942. After serving as an officer in the Air Intelligence Combat Force in North Africa and Italy in World War II, Wilder resumed his writing. His first play in more than a decade, *A Life in the Sun,* had its world première in Edinburgh in the summer of 1955, soon after a new production of *The Skin of Our Teeth,* starring Helen Hayes and Mary Martin, had returned from a Paris engagement and had opened on Broadway.

All Wilder's plays are concerned with man in his larger, more universal aspects. As he writes of his latest play: "On one level my play recounts the life of a woman — of many women — from bewildered bride to sorely tested wife to overburdened old age. On another level it is a wildly romantic story of gods and men, of death and hell and resurrection, of great loves, and great trials, of usurpation and revenge. On another level, however, it is a comedy . . . about the extreme difficulty of any dialogue between heaven and earth, about the misunderstandings that result from

the 'incommensurability of things human and divine.' " The same universality is seen in *The Skin of Our Teeth,* a kind of allegorical comedy tracing the course of human history from Adam and Eve to the present. Despite all tribulations, war, and crises, with faith and knowledge and the will to survive, humanity, says Wilder, will always struggle to rise above chaos and destruction "to build new worlds." The essential dignity of the human being will triumph and endure through the years, although there will always be the struggle between good and evil and man will perennially escape destruction by the skin of his teeth.

Wilder's theme is a traditional one in literature and, when stated in oversimplified, bald prose, may appear to be trite. It is not what Wilder says but how he says it that is intriguingly new. Like O'Neill a generation ago and Williams today, Wilder is searching for fresh and vital dramatic expression. Not only does he satirize many of the foibles and absurdities of American home life, but he also ridicules his own dramatic medium, the theater, and most of the realistic theatrical conventions set up by Ibsen sixty years earlier. In one sense, Wilder is returning to an earlier mode of drama before the modern realistic theater had created the barrier of a "fourth wall" between audience and actor. Moreover, he keeps his audience fully aware of the fact that they are in a theater, whereas most of his predecessors since Ibsen's time had attempted to create an illusion of reality, a literal copy of life. Wilder's approach to dramaturgy is sometimes called "nonrepresentational" because it does not try to represent on stage life as it is, but rather to create a view of life while recognizing the distinctly artificial nature of the theater.

PRINCIPAL WORKS

Novels

The Cabala (1926)
The Bridge of San Luis Rey (1927)
The Woman of Andros (1930)
Heaven's My Destination (1934)
The Ides of March (1948)

Collections of Short Plays

The Angel That Troubled the Waters (1928)
The Long Christmas Dinner (1931)
The Happy Journey (1934)
Our Century (1947)

PLAYS

The Merchant of Yonkers (1938; rewritten as *The Matchmaker* in 1954)
Our Town (1938)
The Skin of Our Teeth (1942)
A Life in the Sun (1955)

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Current Biography, New York, 1943.
Gagey, E. M., *Revolution in American Drama,* New York, 1947.
Gilder, Rosamond, "Old Indestructible," *Theatre Arts,* XXVII (January 1943), 9-11.
Kunitz, S. J., and H. Haycraft, *Twentieth Century Authors,* New York, 1942.
Mantle, Burns, *Contemporary American Playwrights,* New York, 1938.
Wilder, Thornton, "The Silent Generation," *Harper's Magazine,* CCVI (April 1953), 34-36.

NOTES ON *THE SKIN OF OUR TEETH*

1. Antrobus is derived from the Greek word *anthrōpos,* meaning *man* or *human being.*
2. Excelsior is the Latin word for *higher.*
3. Genesis ii.18 (the inscription on the lost wedding ring, p. 699): "And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him."
4. Homer's lines (p. 719) are from the beginning of the *Iliad:* "The wrath do you sing, O goddess, of Peleus' son, Achilles, that baneful wrath which brought countless woes upon the Achaeans, and sent forth to Hades . . . ."
5. Lilith is Adam's first wife in rabbinical literature. In Act Two Sabina is called Lily.
6. Moses' lines (p. 719) are from Genesis i.1-2: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."
7. The Muses (p. 719) are the nine goddesses of song, poetry, the arts, and sciences in Greek mythology. Miss E. Muse is either Erato, the muse of lyric and love poetry, or Euterpe, the muse of music. Miss M. Muse is Melpomene, the muse of tragedy. Miss T. Muse is either Terpsichore, the muse of dancing and choral song, or Thalia, the muse of comedy and pastoral poetry.
8. Spinoza (pp. 754, 770) was a Dutch philosopher (1632-1677).

CHARACTERS

ANNOUNCER
SABINA
MR. FITZPATRICK
MRS. ANTROBUS
DINOSAUR
MAMMOTH
TELEGRAPH BOY
GLADYS
HENRY
MR. ANTROBUS
DOCTOR
PROFESSOR
JUDGE
HOMER
MISS E. MUSE
MISS T. MUSE
MISS M. MUSE
2 USHERS
2 DRUM MAJORETTES
FORTUNE TELLER
2 CHAIR PUSHERS
6 CONVEENERS
BROADCAST OFFICIAL
DEFEATED CANDIDATE
MR. TREMAYNE
HESTER
IVY
FRED BAILEY

ACT I. Home, Excelsior, New Jersey.
ACT II. Atlantic City Boardwalk.
ACT III. Home, Excelsior, New Jersey.

The Skin of Our Teeth was first performed at the Shubert Theater, New Haven, Connecticut, October 15, 1942, and then in New York City at the Plymouth Theater, November 18, 1942.

Act One

A projection screen in the middle of the curtain. The first lantern slide: the name of the theatre, and the words: NEWS EVENTS OF THE WORLD. An ANNOUNCER'S *voice is heard.*

ANNOUNCER: The management takes pleasure in bringing to you—
The News Events of the World:

(*Slide of the sun appearing above the horizon.*)

Freeport, Long Island:
The sun rose this morning at 6:32 a.m. This gratifying event was first reported by Mrs. Dorothy Stetson of Freeport, Long Island, who promptly telephoned the Mayor.
The Society for Affirming the End of the World at once went into a special session and postponed the arrival of that event for TWENTY-FOUR HOURS.
All honor to Mrs. Stetson for her public spirit.

New York City:
(*Slide of the front doors of the theatre in which this play is playing; three cleaning* WOMEN *with mops and pails.*)
The X Theatre. During the daily cleaning of this theatre a number of lost objects were collected as usual by Mesdames Simpson, Pateslewski, and Moriarty.
Among these objects found today was a wedding ring, inscribed: To Eva from Adam. Genesis II:18.
The ring will be restored to the owner or owners, if their credentials are satisfactory.

Tippehatchee, Vermont:
(*Slide representing a glacier.*)
The unprecedented cold weather of this summer has produced a condition that has not yet been satisfactorily explained. There is a report that a wall of ice is moving southward across these counties. The disruption of communications by the cold wave now crossing

the country has rendered exact information difficult, but little credence is given to the rumor that the ice had pushed the Cathedral of Montreal as far as St. Albans, Vermont.
For further information see your daily papers.

Excelsior, New Jersey:
(*Slide of a modest suburban home.*)
The home of Mr. George Antrobus, the inventor of the wheel. The discovery of the wheel, following so closely on the discovery of the lever, has centered the attention of the country on Mr. Antrobus of this attractive suburban residence district. This is his home, a commodious seven-room house, conveniently situated near a public school, a Methodist church, and a firehouse; it is right handy to an A. and P.
(*Slide of* MR. ANTROBUS *on his front steps, smiling and lifting his straw hat. He holds a wheel.*)
Mr. Antrobus, himself. He comes of very old stock and has made his way up from next to nothing.
It is reported that he was once a gardener, but left that situation under circumstances that have been variously reported.
Mr. Antrobus is a veteran of foreign wars, and bears a number of scars, front and back.
(*Slide of* MRS. ANTROBUS, *holding some roses.*)
This is Mrs. Antrobus, the charming and gracious president of the Excelsior Mothers' Club.
Mrs. Antrobus is an excellent needlewoman; it is she who invented the apron on which so many interesting changes have been rung since.
(*Slide of the* FAMILY and SABINA.)
Here we see the Antrobuses with their two children, Henry and Gladys, and friend. The friend in the rear is Lily Sabina, the maid. I know we all want to congratulate this typical American family on its enterprise. We all wish Mr. Antrobus a successful future. Now the management takes you to the interior of this home for a brief visit.

(*Curtain rises. Living room of a commuter's home.* SABINA—*straw-blonde, over-rouged—is standing by the window back center, a feather duster under her elbow.*)

SABINA: Oh, oh, oh! Six o'clock and the master not home yet.
Pray God nothing serious has happened to him crossing the Hudson River. If anything happened to him, we would certainly be inconsolable and have to move into a less desirable residence district.

The fact is I don't know what'll become of us. Here it is the middle of August and the coldest day of the year. It's simply freezing; the dogs are sticking to the sidewalks; can anybody explain that? No. But I'm not surprised. The whole world's at sixes and sevens, and why the house hasn't fallen down about our ears long ago is a miracle to me.

(*A fragment of the right wall leans precariously over the stage.* SABINA *looks at it nervously and it slowly rights itself.*)

Every night this same anxiety as to whether the master will get home safely: whether he'll bring home anything to eat. In the midst of life we are in the midst of death, a truer word was never said.

(*The fragment of scenery flies up into the lofts.* SABINA *is struck dumb with surprise, shrugs her shoulders and starts dusting* MR. ANTROBUS' *chair, including the under side.*)

Of course, Mr. Antrobus is a very fine man, an excellent husband and father, a pillar of the church, and has all the best interests of the community at heart. Of course, every muscle goes tight every time he passes a policeman; but what I think is that there are certain charges that ought not to be made, and I think I may add, ought not to be allowed to be made; we're all human; who isn't?

(*She dusts* MRS. ANTROBUS' *rocking chair.*)

Mrs. Antrobus is as fine a woman as you could hope to see. She lives only for her children; and if it would be any benefit to her children she'd see the rest of us stretched out dead at her feet without turning a hair,—that's the truth. If you want to know anything more about Mrs. Antrobus, just go and look at a tigress, and look hard.

As to the children—

Well, Henry Antrobus is a real, clean-cut American boy. He'll graduate from High School one of these days, if they make the alphabet any easier.—Henry, when he has a stone in his hand, has a perfect aim, he can hit anything from a bird to an older brother—Oh! I didn't mean to say that!—but it certainly was an unfortunate accident, and it was very hard getting the police out of the house.

Mr. and Mrs. Antrobus' daughter is named Gladys. She'll make some good man a good wife some day, if he'll just come down off the movie screen and ask her.

So here we are!

We've managed to survive for some time now, catch as catch can, the fat and the lean, and if the dinosaurs don't trample us to death, and if the grasshoppers don't eat up our garden, we'll all live to see better days, knock on wood.

Each new child that's born to the Antrobuses seems to them to be sufficient reason for the whole universe's being set in motion; and

each new child that dies seems to them to have been spared a whole world of sorrow, and what the end of it will be is still very much an open question.
We've rattled along, hot and cold, for some time now—
(*A portion of the wall above the door, right, flies up into the air and disappears.*)
—and my advice to you is not to inquire into why or whither, but just enjoy your ice cream while it's on your plate,—that's my philosophy.
Don't forget that a few years ago we came through the depression by the skin of our teeth! One more tight squeeze like that and where will we be?
(*This is a cue line.* SABINA *looks angrily at the kitchen door and repeats:*)
. . . we came through the depression by the skin of our teeth; one more tight squeeze like that and where will we be?
(*Flustered, she looks through the opening in the right wall; then goes to the window and reopens the Act.*)
Oh, oh, oh! Six o'clock and the master not home yet. Pray God nothing has happened to him crossing the Hudson. Here it is the middle of August and the coldest day of the year. It's simply freezing; the dogs are sticking. One more tight squeeze like that and where will we be?

VOICE (*off stage*): Make up something! Invent something!

SABINA: Well . . . uh . . . this certainly is a fine American home . . . and—uh . . . everybody's very happy . . . and—uh . . .
(*Suddenly flings pretense to the winds and coming downstage says with indignation:*)
I can't invent any words for this play, and I'm glad I can't. I hate this play and every word in it.
As for me, I don't understand a single word of it, anyway,—all about the troubles the human race has gone through, there's a subject for you.
Besides the author hasn't made up his silly mind as to whether we're all living back in caves or in New Jersey today, and that's the way it is all the way through.
Oh—why can't we have plays like we used to have—*Peg o' My Heart*, and *Smilin' Thru*, and *The Bat*, good entertainment with a message you can take home with you?
I took this hateful job because I had to. For two years I've sat up in my room living on a sandwich and a cup of tea a day, waiting for

better times in the theatre. And look at me now: I—I who've played *Rain* and the *Barretts of Wimpole Street* and *First Lady*—God in Heaven!

MR. FITZPATRICK (*the* STAGE MANAGER *puts his head out from the hole in the scenery*): Miss Somerset!! Miss Somerset!

SABINA: Oh! Anyway!—nothing matters! It'll all be the same in a hundred years.
(*Loudly.*)
We came through the depression by the skin of our teeth,—that's true!—one more tight squeeze like that and where will we be?

(*Enter* MRS. ANTROBUS, *a mother.*)

MRS. ANTROBUS: Sabina, you've let the fire go out.

SABINA (*in a lather*): One-thing-and-another; don't-know-whether-my-wits-are-upside-or-down; might-as-well-be-dead-as-alive-in-a-house-all-sixes-and-sevens. . . .

MRS. ANTROBUS: You've let the fire go out. Here it is the coldest day of the year right in the middle of August, and you've let the fire go out.

SABINA: Mrs. Antrobus, I'd like to give my two weeks' notice, Mrs. Antrobus. A girl like I can get a situation in a home where they're rich enough to have a fire in every room, Mrs. Antrobus, and a girl don't have to carry the responsibility of the whole house on her two shoulders. And a home without children, Mrs. Antrobus, because children are a thing only a parent can stand, and a truer word was never said; and a home, Mrs. Antrobus, where the master of the house don't pinch decent, self-respecting girls when he meets them in a dark corridor. I mention no names and make no charges. So you have my notice, Mrs. Antrobus. I hope that's perfectly clear.

MRS. ANTROBUS: You've let the fire go out!—Have you milked the mammoth?

SABINA: I don't understand a word of this play.—Yes, I've milked the mammoth.

MRS. ANTROBUS: Until Mr. Antrobus comes home we have no food and we have no fire. You'd better go over to the neighbors and borrow some fire.

SABINA: Mrs. Antrobus! I can't! I'd die on the way, you know I would. It's worse than January. The dogs are sticking to the sidewalks. I'd die.

MRS. ANTROBUS: Very well, I'll go.

SABINA (*even more distraught, coming forward and sinking on her knees*): You'd never come back alive; we'd all perish; if you weren't here, we'd just perish. How do we know Mr. Antrobus'll be back? We don't know. If you go out, I'll just kill myself.

MRS. ANTROBUS: Get up, Sabina.

SABINA: Every night it's the same thing. Will he come back safe, or won't he? Will we starve to death, or freeze to death, or boil to death or will we be killed by burglars? I don't know why we go on living. I don't know why we go on living at all. It's easier being dead.

(*She flings her arms on the table and buries her head in them. In each of the succeeding speeches she flings her head up—and sometimes her hands—then quickly buries her head again.*)

MRS. ANTROBUS: The same thing! Always throwing up the sponge, Sabina. Always announcing your own death. But give you a new hat—or a plate of ice cream—or a ticket to the movies, and you want to live forever.

SABINA: You don't care whether we live or die; all you care about is those children. If it would be any benefit to them you'd be glad to see us all stretched out dead.

MRS. ANTROBUS: Well, maybe I would.

SABINA: And what do they care about? Themselves—that's all they care about.
(*Shrilly.*)
They make fun of you behind your back. Don't tell me: they're ashamed of you. Half the time, they pretend they're someone else's children. Little thanks you get from them.

MRS. ANTROBUS: I'm not asking for any thanks.

SABINA: And Mr. Antrobus—you don't understand *him*. All that work he does—trying to discover the alphabet and the multiplication table. Whenever he tries to learn anything you fight against it.

MRS. ANTROBUS: Oh, Sabina, I know you.
When Mr. Antrobus raped you home from your Sabine hills, he did it to insult me.
He did it for your pretty face, and to insult me.
You were the new wife, weren't you?
For a year or two you lay on your bed all day and polished the nails on your hands and feet.
You made puff-balls of the combings of your hair and you blew them up to the ceiling.
And I washed your underclothes and I made you chicken broths. I bore children and between my very groans I stirred the cream that you'd put on your face.
But I knew you wouldn't last.
You didn't last.

SABINA: But it was I who encouraged Mr. Antrobus to make the alphabet. I'm sorry to say it, Mrs. Antrobus, but you're not a beautiful woman, and you can never know what a man could do if he tried. It's girls like I who inspire the multiplication table.
I'm sorry to say it, but you're not a beautiful woman, Mrs. Antrobus, and that's the God's truth.

MRS. ANTROBUS: And you didn't last—you sank to the kitchen. And what do you do there? *You let the fire go out!*
No wonder to you it seems easier being dead.
Reading and writing and counting on your fingers is all very well in their way,—but I keep the home going.

MRS. ANTROBUS: —There's that dinosaur on the front lawn again. —Shoo! Go away. Go away.

(*The baby* DINOSAUR *puts his head in the window.*)

DINOSAUR: It's cold.

MRS. ANTROBUS: You go around to the back of the house where you belong.

DINOSAUR: It's cold.

(*The* DINOSAUR *disappears.* MRS. ANTROBUS *goes calmly out.*
SABINA *slowly raises her head and speaks to the audience. The central portion of the center wall rises, pauses, and disappears into the loft.*)

SABINA: Now that you audience are listening to this, too, I understand it a little better.
I wish eleven o'clock were here; I don't want to be dragged through this whole play again.
(*The* TELEGRAPH BOY *is seen entering along the back wall of the stage from the right. She catches sight of him and calls:*)
Mrs. Antrobus! Mrs. Antrobus! Help! There's a strange man coming to the house. He's coming up the walk, help!

(*Enter* MRS. ANTROBUS *in alarm, but efficient.*)

MRS. ANTROBUS: Help me quick!
(*They barricade the door by piling the furniture against it.*)
Who is it? What do you want?

TELEGRAPH BOY: A telegram for Mrs. Antrobus from Mr. Antrobus in the city.

SABINA: Are you sure, are you sure? Maybe it's just a trap!

MRS. ANTROBUS: I know his voice, Sabina. We can open the door.
(*Enter the* TELEGRAPH BOY, *12 years old, in uniform. The* DINOSAUR and MAMMOTH *slip by him into the room and settle down front right.*)
I'm sorry we kept you waiting. We have to be careful, you know.
(*To the* ANIMALS.)
Hm! . . . Will you be quiet?
(*They nod.*)
Have you had your supper?
(*They nod.*)
Are you *ready* to come in?
(*They nod.*)
Young man, have you any fire with you? Then light the grate, will you?
(*He nods, produces something like a briquet; and kneels by the imagined fireplace, footlights center. Pause.*)
What are people saying about this cold weather?
(*He makes a doubtful shrug with his shoulders.*)
Sabina, take this stick and go and light the stove.

SABINA: Like I told you, Mrs. Antrobus; two weeks. That's the law. I hope that's perfectly clear.
(*Exit.*)

MRS. ANTROBUS: What about this cold weather?

TELEGRAPH BOY (*lowered eyes*): Of course, I don't know anything . . . but they say there's a wall of ice moving down from the North, that's what they say. We can't get Boston by telegraph, and they're burning pianos in Hartford.
. . . It moves everything in front of it, churches and post offices and city halls.
I live in Brooklyn myself.

MRS. ANTROBUS: What are people doing about it?

TELEGRAPH BOY: Well . . . uh . . . Talking, mostly.
Or just what you'd do a day in February.
There are some that are trying to go South and the roads are crowded; but you can't take old people and children very far in a cold like this.

MRS. ANTROBUS: —What's this telegram you have for me?

TELEGRAPH BOY (*fingertips to his forehead*): If you wait just a minute; I've got to remember it.
(*The* ANIMALS *have left their corner and are nosing him. Presently they take places on either side of him, leaning against his hips, like heraldic beasts.*)
This telegram was flashed from Murray Hill to University Heights! And then by puffs of smoke from University Heights to Staten Island.
And then by lantern from Staten Island to Plainfield, New Jersey.
What hath God wrought!
(*He clears his throat.*)
"To Mrs. Antrobus, Excelsior, New Jersey:
My dear wife, will be an hour late. Busy day at the office. Don't worry the children about the cold just keep them warm burn everything except Shakespeare."
(*Pause.*)

MRS. ANTROBUS: Men! —He knows I'd burn ten Shakespeares to prevent a child of mine from having one cold in the head. What does it say next?

(*Enter* SABINA.)

TELEGRAPH BOY: "Have made great discoveries today have separated em from en."

SABINA: I know what that is, that's the alphabet, yes it is. Mr. Antrobus is just the cleverest man. Why, when the alphabet's finished, we'll be able to tell the future and everything.

TELEGRAPH BOY: Then listen to this: "Ten tens make a hundred semicolon consequences far-reaching."
(*Watches for effect.*)

MRS. ANTROBUS: The earth's turning to ice, and all he can do is to make up new numbers.

TELEGRAPH BOY: Well, Mrs. Antrobus, like the head man at our office said: a few more discoveries like that and we'll be worth freezing.

MRS. ANTROBUS: What does he say next?

TELEGRAPH BOY: I . . . I can't do this last part very well.
(*He clears his throat and sings.*)
"Happy w'dding ann'vers'ry to you, Happy ann'vers'ry to you—"

(*The* ANIMALS *begin to howl soulfully;* SABINA *screams with pleasure.*)

MRS. ANTROBUS: Dolly! Frederick! Be quiet.

TELEGRAPH BOY (*above the din*): "Happy w'dding ann'vers'ry, dear Eva; happy w'dding ann'vers'ry to you."

MRS. ANTROBUS: Is that in the telegram? Are they singing telegrams now?
(*He nods.*)
The earth's getting so silly no wonder the sun turns cold.

SABINA: Mrs. Antrobus, I want to take back the notice I gave you. Mrs. Antrobus, I don't want to leave a house that gets such interesting telegrams and I'm sorry for anything I said. I really am.

MRS. ANTROBUS: Young man, I'd like to give you something for all this trouble; Mr. Antrobus isn't home yet and I have no money and no food in the house—

TELEGRAPH BOY: Mrs. Antrobus . . . I don't like to . . . appear to . . . ask for anything, but . . .

MRS. ANTROBUS: What is it you'd like?

TELEGRAPH BOY: Do you happen to have an old needle you could spare? My wife just sits home all day thinking about needles.

SABINA (*shrilly*): We only got two in the house. Mrs. Antrobus, you know we only got two in the house.

MRS. ANTROBUS (*after a look at* SABINA *taking a needle from her collar*): Why yes, I can spare this.

TELEGRAPH BOY (*lowered eyes*): Thank you, Mrs. Antrobus. Mrs. Antrobus, can I ask you something else? I have two sons of my own; if the cold gets worse, what should I do?

SABINA: I think we'll all perish, that's what I think. Cold like this in August is just the end of the whole world.

(*Silence.*)

MRS. ANTROBUS: I don't know. After all, what does one do about anything? Just keep as warm as you can. And don't let your wife and children see that you're worried.

TELEGRAPH BOY: Yes . . . Thank you, Mrs. Antrobus. Well, I'd better be going.—Oh, I forgot! There's one more sentence in the telegram. "Three cheers have invented the wheel."

MRS. ANTROBUS: A wheel? What's a wheel?

TELEGRAPH BOY: I don't know. That's what it said. The sign for it is like this. Well, goodbye.

(*The* WOMEN *see him to the door, with goodbyes and injunctions to keep warm.*)

SABINA (*apron to her eyes, wailing*): Mrs. Antrobus, it looks to me like all the nice men in the world are already married; I don't know why that is.
(*Exit.*)

MRS. ANTROBUS (*thoughtful; to the* ANIMALS): Do you ever remember hearing tell of any cold like this in August?
(*The* ANIMALS *shake their heads.*)
From your grandmothers or anyone?
(*They shake their heads.*)
Have you any suggestions?
(*They shake their heads.*

She pulls her shawl around, goes to the front door and opening it an inch calls:)
HENRY. GLADYS. CHILDREN. Come right in and get warm. No, no, when mama says a thing she means it.
Henry! HENRY. Put down that stone. You know what happened last time.
(*Shriek.*)
HENRY! Put down that stone!
Gladys! Put down your dress!! Try and be a lady.

(*The* CHILDREN *bound in and dash to the fire. They take off their winter things and leave them in heaps on the floor.*)

GLADYS: Mama, I'm hungry. Mama, why is it so cold?

HENRY (*at the same time*): Mama, why doesn't it snow? Mama, when's supper ready? Maybe, it'll snow and we can make snowballs.

GLADYS: Mama, it's so cold that in one more minute I just couldn't of stood it.

MRS. ANTROBUS: Settle down, both of you, I want to talk to you. (*She draws up a hassock and sits front center over the orchestra pit before the imaginary fire. The* CHILDREN *stretch out on the floor, leaning against her lap. Tableau by Raphael. The* ANIMALS *edge up and complete the triangle.*)
It's just a cold spell of some kind. Now listen to what I'm saying: When your father comes home I want you to be extra quiet. He's had a hard day at the office and I don't know but what he may have one of his moods.
I just got a telegram from him very happy and excited, and you know what that means. Your father's temper's uneven; I guess you know that.
(*Shriek.*)
Henry! Henry!
Why—why can't you remember to keep your hair down over your forehead? You must keep that scar covered up. Don't you know that when your father sees it he loses all control over himself. He goes crazy. He wants to die.
(*After a moment's despair she collects herself decisively, wets the hem of her apron in her mouth and starts polishing his forehead vigorously.*)
Lift your head up. Stop squirming. Blessed me, sometimes I think that it's going away—and then there it is: just as red as ever.

HENRY: Mama, today at school two teachers forgot and called me by my old name. They forgot, Mama. You'd better write another letter to the principal, so that he'll tell them I've changed my name. Right out in class they called me: Cain.

MRS. ANTROBUS (*putting her hand on his mouth, too late; hoarsely*): Don't say it.
(*Polishing feverishly.*)
If you're good they'll forget it. Henry, you didn't hit anyone . . . today, did you?

HENRY: Oh . . . no-o-o!

MRS. ANTROBUS (*still working, not looking at Gladys*): And, Gladys, I want you to be especially nice to your father tonight. You know what he calls you when you're good—his little angel, his little star. Keep your dress down like a little lady. And keep your voice nice and low. Gladys Antrobus!! What's that red stuff you have on your face?
(*Slaps her.*)
You're a filthy detestable child!
(*Rises in real, though temporary, repudiation and despair.*)
Get away from me, both of you! I wish I'd never seen sight or sound of you. Let the cold come! I can't stand it. I don't want to go on.

(*She walks away.*)

GLADYS (*weeping*): All the girls at school do, Mama.

MRS. ANTROBUS (*shrieking*): I'm through with you, that's all!—Sabina! Sabina!—Don't you know your father'd go crazy if he saw that paint on your face? Don't you know your father thinks you're perfect? Don't you know he couldn't live if he didn't think you were perfect?—Sabina!

(*Enter* SABINA.)

SABINA: Yes, Mrs. Antrobus!

MRS. ANTROBUS: Take this girl out into the kitchen and wash her face with the scrubbing brush.

MR. ANTROBUS (*outside, roaring*): "I've been working on the railroad, all the livelong day . . . etc."

(*The* ANIMALS *start running around in circles, bellowing.* SABINA *rushes to the window.*)

MRS. ANTROBUS: Sabina, what's that noise outside?

SABINA: Oh, it's a drunken tramp. It's a giant, Mrs. Antrobus. We'll all be killed in our beds, I know it!

MRS. ANTROBUS: Help me quick. Quick. Everybody.
(*Again they stack all the furniture against the door. Mr. Antrobus pounds and bellows.*)
Who is it? What do you want?—Sabina, have you any boiling water ready?—Who is it?

MR. ANTROBUS: Broken-down camel of a pig's snout, open this door.

MRS. ANTROBUS: God be praised! It's your father.—Just a minute, George!—Sabina, clear the door, quick. Gladys, come here while I clean your nasty face!

MR. ANTROBUS: She-bitch of a goat's gizzard, I'll break every bone in your body. Let me in or I'll tear the whole house down.

MRS. ANTROBUS: Just a minute, George, something's the matter with the lock.

MR. ANTROBUS: Open the door or I'll tear your livers out. I'll smash your brains on the ceiling, and Devil takes the hindmost.

MRS. ANTROBUS: Now, you can open the door, Sabina. I'm ready.

(*The door is flung open. Silence.* MR. ANTROBUS—*face of a Keystone Comedy Cop—stands there in fur cap and blanket. His arms are full of parcels, including a large stone wheel with a center in it. One hand carries a railroad man's lantern. Suddenly he bursts into joyous roar.*)

MR. ANTROBUS: Well, how's the whole crooked family?
(*Relief. Laughter. Tears. Jumping up and down.* ANIMALS *cavorting.* ANTROBUS *throws the parcels on the ground. Hurls his cap and blanket after them. Heroic embraces. Melee of* HUMANS *and* ANIMALS, SABINA *included.*)
I'll be scalded and tarred if a man can't get a little welcome when he comes home. Well, Maggie, you old gunny-sack, how's the broken down old weather hen?—Sabina, old fishbait, old skunkpot.—And the children,—how've the little smellers been?

GLADYS: Papa, Papa, Papa, Papa, Papa.

MR. ANTROBUS: How've they been, Maggie?

MRS. ANTROBUS: Well, I must say, they've been as good as gold. I haven't had to raise my voice once. I don't know what's the matter with them.

ANTROBUS (*kneeling before* GLADYS): Papa's little weasel, eh?—Sabina, there's some food for you.—Papa's little gopher?

GLADYS (*her arm around his neck*): Papa, you're always teasing me.

ANTROBUS: And Henry? Nothing rash today, I hope. Nothing rash?

HENRY: No, Papa.

ANTROBUS (*roaring*): Well that's good, that's good—I'll bet Sabina let the fire go out.

SABINA: Mr. Antrobus, I've given my notice. I'm leaving two weeks from today. I'm sorry, but I'm leaving.

ANTROBUS (*roar*): Well, if you leave now you'll freeze to death, so go and cook the dinner.

SABINA: Two weeks, that's the law.
(*Exit.*)

ANTROBUS: Did you get my telegram?

MRS. ANTROBUS: Yes.—What's a wheel?

(*He indicates the wheel with a glance.* HENRY *is rolling it around the floor. Rapid, hoarse interchange:* MRS. ANTROBUS: *What does this cold weather mean? It's below freezing.* ANTROBUS: *Not before the children!* MRS. ANTROBUS: *Shouldn't we do something about it?—start off, move?* ANTROBUS: *Not before the children!!! He gives* HENRY *a sharp slap.*)

HENRY: Papa, you hit me!

ANTROBUS: Well, remember it. That's to make you remember today. Today. The day the alphabet's finished; and the day that we *saw* the hundred—the hundred, the hundred, the hundred, the hundred, the hundred—there's no end to 'em.
I've had a day at the office!

Take a look at that wheel, Maggie—when I've got that to rights: you'll see a sight.
There's a reward there for all the walking you've done.

MRS. ANTROBUS: How do you mean?

ANTROBUS (*on the hassock looking into the fire; with awe*): Maggie, we've reached the top of the wave. There's not much more to be done. We're there!

MRS. ANTROBUS (*cutting across his mood sharply*): And the ice?

ANTROBUS: The ice!

HENRY (*playing with the wheel*): Papa, you could put a chair on this.

ANTROBUS (*broodingly*): Ye-e-s, any booby can fool with it now,—but I thought of it first.

MRS. ANTROBUS: Children, go out in the kitchen. I want to talk to your father alone.

(*The* CHILDREN *go out.*
ANTROBUS *has moved to his chair up left. He takes the goldfish bowl on his lap; pulls the canary cage down to the level of his face. Both the* ANIMALS *put their paws up on the arm of his chair.* MRS. ANTROBUS *faces him across the room, like a judge.*)

MRS. ANTROBUS: Well?

ANTROBUS (*shortly*): It's cold.—How things been, eh? Keck, keck, keck.—And you, Millicent?

MRS. ANTROBUS: I know it's cold.

ANTROBUS (*to the canary*): No spilling of sunflower seed, eh? No singing after lights-out, y'know what I mean?

MRS. ANTROBUS: You can try and prevent us freezing to death, can't you? You can do something? We can start moving. Or we can go on the animals' backs?

ANTROBUS: The best thing about animals is that they don't talk much.

MAMMOTH: It's cold.

ANTROBUS: Eh, eh, eh! Watch that!—
—By midnight we'd turn to ice. The roads are full of people now who can scarcely lift a foot from the ground. The grass out in front is like iron,—which reminds me, I have another needle for you.—The people up north—where are they?
Frozen . . . crushed. . . .

MRS. ANTROBUS: Is that what's going to happen to us?—Will you answer me?

ANTROBUS: I don't know. I don't know anything. Some say that the ice is going slower. Some say that it's stopped. The sun's growing cold. What can I do about that? Nothing we can do but burn everything in the house, and the fenceposts and the barn. Keep the fire going. When we have no more fire, we die.

MRS. ANTROBUS: Well, why didn't you say so in the first place?

(MRS. ANTROBUS *is about to march off when she catches sight of two* REFUGEES, *men, who have appeared against the back wall of the theatre and who are soon joined by others.*)

REFUGEES: Mr. Antrobus! Mr. Antrobus! Mr. An-nn-tro-bus!

MRS. ANTROBUS: Who's that? Who's that calling you?

ANTROBUS (*clearing his throat guiltily*): H'm—let me see.

(*Two* REFUGEES *come up to the window.*)

REFUGEE: Could we warm our hands for a moment, Mr. Antrobus. It's very cold, Mr. Antrobus.

ANOTHER REFUGEE: Mr. Antrobus, I wonder if you have a piece of bread or something that you could spare.

(*Silence. They wait humbly.* MRS. ANTROBUS *stands rooted to the spot. Suddenly a knock at the door, then another hand knocking in short rapid blows.*)

MRS. ANTROBUS: Who are these people? Why, they're all over the front yard. What have they come *here* for?

(*Enter* SABINA.)

SABINA: Mrs. Antrobus! There are some tramps knocking at the back door.

MRS. ANTROBUS: George, tell these people to go away. Tell them to move right along. I'll go and send them away from the back door. Sabina, come with me.

(*She goes out energetically.*)

ANTROBUS: Sabina! Stay here! I have something to say to you.
(*He goes to the door and opens it a crack and talks through it.*)
Ladies and gentlemen! I'll have to ask you to wait a few minutes longer. It'll be all right . . . while you're waiting you might each one pull up a stake of the fence. We'll need them all for the fireplace. There'll be coffee and sandwiches in a moment.

(SABINA *looks out door over his shoulder and suddenly extends her arm pointing, with a scream.*)

SABINA: Mr. Antrobus, what's that??—that big white thing? Mr. Antrobus, it's ICE. It's ICE!!

ANTROBUS: Sabina, I want you to go in the kitchen and make a lot of coffee. Make a whole pail full.

SABINA: Pail full!!

ANTROBUS (*with gesture*): And sandwiches . . . piles of them . . . like this.

SABINA: Mr. An . . . !!
(*Suddenly she drops the play, and says in her own person as* MISS SOMERSET, *with surprise.*)
Oh, *I* see what this part of the play means now! This means refugees.
(*She starts to cross to the proscenium.*)
Oh, I don't like it. I don't like it.

(*She leans against the proscenium and bursts into tears.*)

ANTROBUS: Miss Somerset!
(*Voice of the* STAGE MANAGER.)
Miss Somerset!

SABINA (*energetically, to the audience*): Ladies and gentlemen! Don't take this play serious. The world's not coming to an end. You know it's not. People exaggerate! Most people really have enough to eat and a roof over their heads. Nobody actually starves

—you can always eat grass or something. That ice-business—why, it was a long, long time ago. Besides they were only savages. Savages don't love their families—not like we do.

ANTROBUS *and* STAGE MANAGER: Miss Somerset!!

(*There is renewed knocking at the door.*)

SABINA: All right. I'll say the lines, but I won't think about the play.

(*Enter* MRS. ANTROBUS.)

SABINA (*parting thrust at the audience*): And I advise *you* not to think about the play, either.

(*Exit* SABINA.)

MRS. ANTROBUS: George, these tramps say that you asked them to come to the house. What does this mean?

(*Knocking at the door.*)

ANTROBUS: Just . . . uh . . . There are a few friends, Maggie, I met on the road. Real nice, real useful people. . . .

MRS. ANTROBUS (*back to the door*): Now, don't you ask them in! George Antrobus, not another soul comes in here over my dead body.

ANTROBUS: Maggie, there's a doctor there. Never hurts to have a good doctor in the house. We've lost a peck of children, one way and another. You can never tell when a child's throat will get stopped up. What you and I have seen—!!!

(*He puts his fingers on his throat, and imitates diphtheria.*)

MRS. ANTROBUS: Well, just one person then, the Doctor. The others can go right along the road.

ANTROBUS: Maggie, there's an old man, particular friend of mine—

MRS. ANTROBUS: I won't listen to you—

ANTROBUS: It was he that really started off the A.B.C.'s.

MRS. ANTROBUS: I don't care if he perishes. We can do without reading or writing. We can't do without food.

ANTROBUS: Then let the ice come!! Drink your coffee!! I don't want any coffee if I can't drink it with some good people.

MRS. ANTROBUS: Stop shouting. Who else is there trying to push us off the cliff?

ANTROBUS: Well, there's the man . . . who makes all the laws. Judge Moses!

MRS. ANTROBUS: Judges can't help us now.

ANTROBUS: And if the ice melts? . . . and if we pull through? Have you and I been able to bring up Henry? What have we done?

MRS. ANTROBUS: Who are those old women?

ANTROBUS (*coughs*): Up in town there are nine sisters. There are three or four of them here. They're sort of music teachers . . . and one of them recites and one of them—

MRS. ANTROBUS: That's the end. A singing troupe! Well, take your choice, live or die. Starve your own children before your face.

ANTROBUS (*gently*): These people don't take much. They're used to starving.
They'll sleep on the floor.
Besides, Maggie, listen: no, listen:
Who've we got in the house, but Sabina? Sabina's always afraid the worst will happen. Whose spirits can she keep up? Maggie, these people never give up. They think they'll live and work forever.

MRS. ANTROBUS (*walks slowly to the middle of the room*): All right, let them in. Let them in. You're master here.
(*Softly.*)
—But these animals must go. Enough's enough. They'll soon be big enough to push the walls down, anyway. Take them away.

ANTROBUS (*sadly*): All right. The dinosaur and mammoth—! Come on, baby, come on Frederick. Come for a walk. That's a good little fellow.

DINOSAUR: It's cold.

ANTROBUS: Yes, nice cold fresh air. Bracing.

(*He holds the door open and the* ANIMALS *go out. He beckons to his friends. The* REFUGEES *are typical elderly out-of-works from the streets of New York today.* JUDGE MOSES *wears a skull cap.* HOMER *is a blind beggar with a guitar. The seedy crowd shuffles in and waits humbly and expectantly.* ANTROBUS *introduces them to his wife who bows to each with a stately bend of her head.*)
Make yourself at home, Maggie, this is the doctor . . . m . . . Coffee'll be here in a minute. . . . Professor, this is my wife. . . . And: . . . Judge . . . Maggie, you know the Judge.
(*An old blind man with a guitar.*)
Maggie, you know. . . you know Homer?—Come right in, Judge.—Miss Muse—are some of your sisters here? Come right in. . . . Miss E. Muse; Miss T. Muse, Miss M. Muse.

MRS. ANTROBUS: Pleased to meet you.
Just . . . make yourself comfortable. Supper'll be ready in a minute.

(*She goes out, abruptly.*)

ANTROBUS: Make yourself at home, friends. I'll be right back.

(*He goes out.*
The REFUGEES *stare about them in awe. Presently several voices start whispering "Homer! Homer!" All take it up.* HOMER *strikes a chord or two on his guitar, then starts to speak:*)

HOMER: Μῆνιν ἄειδε, θεὰ, Πηληϊάδεω 'Αχιλῆος,
οὐλομένην, ἣ μυρί' 'Αχαιοῖς ἄλγε' ἔθηκε
πολλὰς δ' ἰφθίμους ψυχὰς—

(HOMER'S *face shows he is lost in thought and memory and the words die away on his lips. The* REFUGEES *likewise nod in dreamy recollection. Soon the whisper "Moses, Moses!" goes around. An aged Jew parts his beard and recites dramatically:*)

MOSES:

בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֵת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֵת הָאָרֶץ: וְהָאָרֶץ הָיְתָה תֹהוּ
וָבֹהוּ וְחֹשֶׁךְ עַל־פְּנֵי תְהוֹם וְרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים מְרַחֶפֶת עַל־פְּנֵי הַמָּיִם:

(*The same dying away of the words takes place, and on the part of the* REFUGEES *the same retreat into recollection. Some of them murmur, "Yes, yes."*

The mood is broken by the abrupt entrance of MR. *and* MRS. ANTROBUS *and* SABINA *bearing platters of sandwiches and a pail of coffee.* SABINA *stops and stares at the guests.*)

MR. ANTROBUS: Sabina, pass the sandwiches.

SABINA: I thought I was working in a respectable house that had respectable guests. I'm giving my notice, Mr. Antrobus: two weeks, that's the law.

MR. ANTROBUS: Sabina! Pass the sandwiches.

SABINA: Two weeks, that's the law.

MR. ANTROBUS: There's the law. That's Moses.

SABINA (*stares*): The Ten Commandments—FAUGH!!—(*To Audience*) That's the worst line I've ever had to say on any stage.

ANTROBUS: I think the best thing to do is just not to stand on ceremony, but pass the sandwiches around from left to right.—Judge, help yourself to one of these.

MRS. ANTROBUS: The roads are crowded, I hear?

THE GUESTS (*all talking at once*): Oh, ma'am, you can't imagine. . . . You can hardly put one foot before you . . . people are trampling one another.

(*Sudden silence.*)

MRS. ANTROBUS: Well, you know what I think it is,—I think it's sunspots!

THE GUESTS (*discreet hubbub*): Oh, you're right, Mrs. Antrobus . . . that's what it is. . . . That's what I was saying the other day.

(*Sudden silence.*)

ANTROBUS: Well, I don't believe the whole world's going to turn to ice.
(*All eyes are fixed on him, waiting:*)
I can't believe it. Judge! Have we worked for nothing? Professor! Have we just failed in the whole thing?

MRS. ANTROBUS: It is certainly very strange—well fortunately on both sides of the family we come of very hearty stock.—Doctor, I

want you to meet my children. They're eating their supper now. And of course I want them to meet you.

MISS M. MUSE: How many children have you, Mrs. Antrobus?

MRS. ANTROBUS: I have two,—a boy and a girl.

THE JUDGE (MOSES, *softly*): I understood you had two sons, Mrs. Antrobus.

(MRS. ANTROBUS *in blind suffering; she walks toward the footlights.*)

MRS. ANTROBUS (*in a low voice*): Abel, Abel, my son, my son, Abel, my son, Abel, Abel, my son.

(*The* REFUGEES *move with few steps toward her as though in comfort murmuring words in Greek, Hebrew, German, et cetera. A piercing shriek from the kitchen,—*SABINA'S *voice. All heads turn.*)

ANTROBUS: What's that?

(SABINA *enters, bursting with indignation, pulling on her gloves.*)

SABINA: Mr. Antrobus—that son of yours, that boy Henry Antrobus —I don't stay in this house another moment!—He's not fit to live among respectable folks and that's a fact.

MRS. ANTROBUS: Don't say another word, Sabina. I'll be right back.

(*Without waiting for an answer she goes past her into the kitchen.*)

SABINA: Mr. Antrobus, Henry has thrown a stone again and if he hasn't killed the boy that lives next door, I'm very much mistaken. He finished his supper and went out to play; and I heard such a fight; and then I saw it. I saw it with my own eyes. And it looked to me like stark murder.

(MRS. ANTROBUS *appears at the kitchen door, shielding* HENRY *who follows her. When she steps aside, we see on* HENRY'S *forehead a large ochre and scarlet scar in the shape of a* C. MR. ANTROBUS *starts toward him. A pause.* HENRY *is heard saying under his breath:*)

HENRY: He was going to take the wheel away from me. He started to throw a stone at me first.

MRS. ANTROBUS: George, it was just a boyish impulse. Remember how young he is.

(*Louder, in an urgent wail.*)
George, he's only four thousand years old.

SABINA: And everything was going along so nicely!

(*Silence.* ANTROBUS *goes back to the fireplace.*)

ANTROBUS: Put out the fire! Put out all the fires.
(*Violently.*)
No wonder the sun grows cold.

(*He starts stamping on the fireplace.*)

MRS. ANTROBUS: Doctor! Judge! Help me!—George, have you lost your mind?

ANTROBUS: There is no mind. We'll not try to live.
(*To the guests.*)
Give it up. Give up trying.

(MRS. ANTROBUS *seizes him.*)

SABINA: Mr. Antrobus! I'm downright ashamed of you.

MRS. ANTROBUS: George, have some more coffee.—Gladys! Where's Gladys gone?

(GLADYS *steps in, frightened.*)

GLADYS: Here I am, mama.

MRS. ANTROBUS: Go upstairs and bring your father's slippers. How could you forget a thing like that, when you know how tired he is?
(ANTROBUS *sits in his chair. He covers his face with his hands.* MRS. ANTROBUS *turns to the* REFUGEES:)
Can't some of you sing? It's your business in life to sing, isn't it?
Sabina!
(*Several of the women clear their throats tentatively, and with frightened faces gather around* HOMER'S *guitar. He establishes a few chords. Almost inaudibly they start singing, led by* SABINA: "*Jingle Bells.*" MRS. ANTROBUS *continues to* ANTROBUS *in a low voice, while taking off his shoes:*)
George, remember all the other times. When the volcanoes came right up in the front yard.
And the time the grasshoppers ate every single leaf and blade of grass, and all the grain and spinach you'd grown with your own hands. And the summer there were earthquakes every night.

ANTROBUS: Henry! Henry!
(*Puts his hand on his forehead.*)
Myself! All of us, we're covered with blood.

MRS. ANTROBUS: Then remember all the times you were pleased with him and when you were proud of yourself.—Henry! Henry! Come here and recite to your father the multiplication table that you do so nicely.

(HENRY *kneels on one knee beside his father and starts whispering the multiplication table.*)

HENRY (*finally*): Two times six is twelve; three times six is eighteen —I don't think I know the sixes.

(*Enter* GLADYS *with the slippers.* MRS. ANTROBUS *makes stern gestures to her: Go in there and do your best. The* GUESTS *are now singing "Tenting Tonight."*)

GLADYS (*putting slippers on his feet*): Papa . . . papa . . . I was very good in school today. Miss Conover said right out in class that if all the girls had as good manners as Gladys Antrobus, that the world would be a very different place to live in.

MRS. ANTROBUS: You recited a piece at assembly, didn't you? Recite it to your father.

GLADYS: Papa, do you want to hear what I recited in class?
(*Fierce directorial glance from her mother.*)
"THE STAR" by Henry Wadsworth LONGFELLOW.

MRS. ANTROBUS: Wait!!! The fire's going out. There isn't enough wood! Henry, go upstairs and bring down the chairs and start breaking up the beds.

(*Exit* HENRY. *The singers return to "Jingle Bells," still very softly.*)

GLADYS: Look, Papa, here's my report card. Lookit. Conduct A! Look, Papa. Papa, do you want to hear the Star, by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow? Papa, you're not mad at me, are you?—I know it'll get warmer. Soon it'll be just like spring, and we can go to a picnic at the Hibernian Picnic Grounds like you always like to do, don't you remember? Papa, just look at me once.

(*Enter* HENRY *with some chairs.*)

ANTROBUS: You recited in assembly, did you?
(*She nods eagerly.*)
You didn't forget it?

GLADYS: No!!! I was perfect.

(*Pause. Then* ANTROBUS *rises, goes to the front door and opens it. The* REFUGEES *draw back timidly; the song stops; he peers out of the door, then closes it.*)

ANTROBUS (*with decision, suddenly*): Build up the fire. It's cold. Build up the fire. We'll do what we can. Sabina, get some more wood. Come around the fire, everybody. At least the young ones may pull through. Henry, have you eaten something?

HENRY: Yes, papa.

ANTROBUS: Gladys, have you had some supper?

GLADYS: I ate in the kitchen, papa.

ANTROBUS: If you do come through this—what'll you be able to do? What do you know? Henry, did you take a good look at that wheel?

HENRY: Yes, papa.

ANTROBUS (*sitting down in his chair*): Six times two are—

HENRY: —twelve; six times three are eighteen; six times four are—Papa, it's hot and cold. It makes my head all funny. It makes me sleepy.

ANTROBUS (*gives him a cuff*): Wake up. I don't care if your head is sleepy. Six times four are twenty-four. Six times five are—

HENRY: Thirty. Papa!

ANTROBUS: Maggie, put something into Gladys' head on the chance she can use it.

MRS. ANTROBUS: What do you mean, George?

ANTROBUS: Six times six are thirty-six.
Teach her the beginning of the Bible.

GLADYS: But, Mama, it's so cold and close.

(HENRY *has all but drowsed off. His father slaps him sharply and the lesson goes on.*)

MRS. ANTROBUS: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth; and the earth was waste and void; and the darkness was upon the face of the deep—"

(*The singing starts up again louder.* SABINA *has returned with wood.*)

SABINA (*after placing wood on the fireplace comes down to the footlights and addresses the audience*): Will you please start handing up your chairs? We'll need everything for this fire. Save the human race.—Ushers, will you pass the chairs up here? Thank you.

HENRY: Six times nine are fifty-four; six times ten are sixty.

(*In the back of the auditorium the sound of chairs being ripped up can be heard.* USHERS *rush down the aisles with chairs and hand them over.*)

GLADYS: "And God called the light Day and the darkness he called Night."

SABINA: Pass up your chairs, everybody. Save the human race.

(*The Curtain Falls.*)

Act Two

Toward the end of the intermission, though with the houselights still up, lantern slide projections begin to appear on the curtain. Timetables for trains leaving Pennsylvania Station for Atlantic City. Advertisements of Atlantic City hotels, drugstores, churches, rug merchants; fortune tellers, Bingo parlors.
When the house-lights go down, the voice of an ANNOUNCER *is heard.*

ANNOUNCER: The Management now brings you the News Events of the World. Atlantic City, New Jersey:
(*Projection of a chrome postcard of the waterfront, trimmed in mica with the legend: FUN AT THE BEACH.*)
This great convention city is playing host this week to the anniversary convocation of that great fraternal order,—the Ancient and Honorable Order of Mammals, Subdivision Humans. This great fraternal, militant and burial society is celebrating on the Boardwalk, ladies and gentlemen, its six hundred thousandth Annual Convention. It has just elected its president for the ensuing term,—
(*Projection of* MR. *and* MRS. ANTROBUS *posed as they will be shown a few moments later.*)
Mr. George Antrobus of Excelsior, New Jersey. We show you President Antrobus and his gracious and charming wife, every inch a mammal. Mr. Antrobus has had a long and chequered career. Credit has been paid to him for many useful enterprises including the introduction of the lever, of the wheel and the brewing of beer. Credit has been also extended to President Antrobus's gracious and charming wife for many practical suggestions, including the hem, the gore, and the gusset; and the novelty of the year,—frying in oil. Before we show you Mr. Antrobus accepting the nomination, we have an important announcement to make. As many of you know, this great celebration of the Order of the Mammals has received delegations from the other rival Orders,—or shall we say: esteemed concurrent Orders: the WINGS, the FINS, the SHELLS, and so on. These Orders are holding their conventions also, in various parts of the world, and have sent representatives to our own, two of a kind.

Later in the day we will show you President Antrobus broadcasting his words of greeting and congratulation to the collected assemblies of the whole natural world.
Ladies and Gentlemen! We give you President Antrobus!

(*The screen becomes a Transparency.* MR. ANTROBUS *stands beside a pedestal;* MRS. ANTROBUS *is seated wearing a corsage of orchids.* ANTROBUS *wears an untidy Prince Albert; spats; from a red rosette in his buttonhole hangs a fine long purple ribbon of honor. He wears a gay lodge hat,—something between a fez and a legionnaire's cap.*)

ANTROBUS: Fellow-mammals, fellow-vertebrates, fellow-humans, I thank you. Little did my dear parents think,—when they told me to stand on my own two feet,—that I'd arrive at this place.
My friends, we have come a long way.
During this week of happy celebration it is perhaps not fitting that we dwell on some of the difficult times we have been through. The dinosaur is extinct—
(*Applause.*)
—the ice has retreated; and the common cold is being pursued by every means within our power.
(MRS. ANTROBUS *sneezes, laughs prettily, and murmurs: "I beg your pardon."*)
In our memorial service yesterday we did honor to all our friends and relatives who are no longer with us, by reason of cold, earthquakes, plagues and . . . and . . .
(*Coughs.*)
differences of opinion.
As our Bishop so ably said . . . uh . . . so ably said. . . .

MRS. ANTROBUS (*closed lips*): Gone, but not forgotten.

ANTROBUS: "They are gone, but not forgotten."
I think I can say, I think I can prophesy with complete . . . uh . . . with complete. . . .

MRS. ANTROBUS: Confidence.

ANTROBUS: Thank you, my dear,—With complete lack of confidence, that a new day of security is about to dawn.
The watchword of the closing year was: Work. I give you the watchword for the future: Enjoy Yourselves.

MRS. ANTROBUS: George, sit down!

ANTROBUS: Before I close, however, I wish to answer one of those unjust and malicious accusations that were brought against me during this last electoral campaign.
Ladies and gentlemen, the charge was made that at various points in my career I leaned toward joining some of the rival orders,—that's a lie.
As I told reporters of the *Atlantic City Herald*, I do not deny that a few months before my birth I hesitated between . . . uh . . . between pinfeathers and gill-breathing,—and so did many of us here,—but for the last million years I have been viviparous, hairy and diaphragmatic.

(*Applause, Cries of "Good old Antrobus," "The Prince chap!" "Georgie," etc.*)

ANNOUNCER: Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Antrobus. Now I know that our visitors will wish to hear a word from that gracious and charming mammal, Mrs. Antrobus, wife and mother, —Mrs. Antrobus!

(MRS. ANTROBUS *rises, lays her program on her chair, bows and says:*)

MRS. ANTROBUS: Dear friends, I don't really think I should say anything. After all, it was my husband who was elected and not I. Perhaps, as president of the Women's Auxiliary Bed and Board Society,—I had some notes here, oh, yes, here they are:—I should give a short report from some of our committees that have been meeting in this beautiful city.
Perhaps it may interest you to know that it has at last been decided that the tomato is edible. Can you all hear me? The tomato *is* edible. A delegate from across the sea reports that the thread woven by the silkworm gives a cloth . . . I have a sample of it here . . . can you see it? smooth, elastic. I should say that it's rather attractive,—though personally I prefer less shiny surfaces. Should the windows of a sleeping apartment be open or shut? I know all mothers will follow our debates on this matter with close interest. I am sorry to say that the most expert authorities have not yet decided. It does seem to me that the night air would be bound to be unhealthy for our children, but there are many distinguished authorities on both sides. Well, I could go on talking forever,—as Shakespeare says: a woman's work is seldom done; but I think I'd better join my husband in saying thank you, and sit down. Thank you.

(*She sits down.*)

ANNOUNCER: Oh, Mrs. Antrobus!

MRS. ANTROBUS: Yes?

ANNOUNCER: We understand that you are about to celebrate a wedding anniversary. I know our listeners would like to extend their felicitations and hear a few words from you on that subject.

MRS. ANTROBUS: I have been asked by this kind gentleman . . . yes, my friends, this Spring Mr. Antrobus and I will be celebrating our five thousandth wedding anniversary.
I don't know if I speak for my husband, but I can say that, as for me, I regret every moment of it.
(*Laughter of confusion.*)
I beg your pardon. What I *mean* to say is that I do not regret one moment of it. I hope none of you catch my cold. We have two children. We've always had two children, though it hasn't always been the same two. But as I say, we have two fine children, and we're very grateful for that. Yes, Mr. Antrobus and I have been married five thousand years. Each wedding anniversary reminds me of the times when there were no weddings. We had to crusade for marriage. Perhaps there are some women within the sound of my voice who remember that crusade and those struggles; we fought for it, didn't we? We chained ourselves to lampposts and we made disturbances in the Senate,—anyway, at last we women got the ring. A few men helped us, but I must say that most men blocked our way at every step: they said we were unfeminine.
I only bring up these unpleasant memories, because I see some signs of backsliding from that great victory.
Oh, my fellow mammals, keep hold of that.
My husband says that the watchword for the year is Enjoy Yourselves. I think that's very open to misunderstanding. My watchword for the year is: Save the Family. It's held together for over five thousand years: Save it! Thank you.

ANNOUNCER: Thank you, Mrs. Antrobus.
(*The transparency disappears.*)
We had hoped to show you the Beauty Contest that took place here today.
President Antrobus, an experienced judge of pretty girls, gave the title of Miss Atlantic City 1942, to Miss Lily-Sabina Fairweather, charming hostess of our Boardwalk Bingo Parlor.
Unfortunately, however, our time is up, and I must take you to

some views of the Convention City and conveeners,—enjoying themselves.

(*A burst of music; the curtain rises.*
The Boardwalk. The audience is sitting in the ocean. A handrail of scarlet cord stretches across the front of the stage. A ramp—also with scarlet hand rail—descends to the right corner of the orchestra pit where a great scarlet beach umbrella or a cabana stands. Front and right stage left are benches facing the sea; attached to each bench is a street-lamp.
The only scenery is two cardboard cut-outs six feet high, representing shops at the back of the stage. Reading from left to right they are: SALT WATER TAFFY; FORTUNE TELLER; then the blank space; BINGO PARLOR; TURKISH BATH. They have practical doors, that of the Fortune Teller's being hung with bright gypsy curtains.
By the left proscenium and rising from the orchestra pit is the weather signal; it is like the mast of a ship with cross bars. From time to time black discs are hung on it to indicate the storm and hurricane warnings. Three roller chairs, pushed by melancholy NEGROES *file by empty. Throughout the act they traverse the stage in both directions.*
From time to time, CONVEENERS, *dressed like* MR. ANTROBUS, *cross the stage. Some walk sedately by; others engage in inane horseplay. The old gypsy* FORTUNE TELLER *is seated at the door of her shop, smoking a corncob pipe.*
From the Bingo Parlor comes the voice of the CALLER.)

BINGO CALLER: A-Nine; A-Nine. C-Twenty-six; C-Twenty-six. A-Four; A-Four. B-Twelve.

CHORUS (*back-stage*): Bingo!!!

(*The front of the Bingo Parlor shudders, rises a few feet in the air and returns to the ground trembling.*)

FORTUNE TELLER (*mechanically, to the unconscious back of a passerby, pointing with her pipe*): Bright's disease! Your partner's deceiving you in that Kansas City deal. You'll have six grandchildren. Avoid high places.
(*She rises and shouts after another:*)
Cirrhosis of the liver!

(SABINA *appears at the door of the Bingo Parlor. She hugs about her a blue raincoat that almost conceals her red bathing suit. She tries to catch the* FORTUNE TELLER'S *attention.*)

SABINA: Ssssst! Esmeralda! Ssssst!

FORTUNE TELLER: Keck!

SABINA: Has President Antrobus come along yet?

FORTUNE TELLER: No, no, no. Get back there. Hide yourself.

SABINA: I'm afraid I'll miss him. Oh, Esmeralda, if I fail in this, I'll die; I know I'll die. President Antrobus!!! And I'll be his wife! If it's the last thing I'll do, I'll be Mrs. George Antrobus.—Esmeralda, tell me my future.

FORTUNE TELLER: Keck!

SABINA: All right, I'll tell *you* my future.
(*Laughing dreamily and tracing it out with one finger on the palm of her hand.*)
I've won the Beauty Contest in Atlantic City,—well, I'll win the Beauty Contest of the whole world. I'll take President Antrobus away from that wife of his. Then I'll take every man away from his wife. I'll turn the whole earth upside down.

FORTUNE TELLER: Keck!

SABINA: When all those husbands just think about me they'll get dizzy. They'll faint in the streets. They'll have to lean against lamp-posts.—Esmeralda, who was Helen of Troy?

FORTUNE TELLER (*furiously*): Shut your foolish mouth. When Mr. Antrobus comes along you can see what you can do. Until then, —go away.

(SABINA *laughs. As she returns to the door of her Bingo Parlor a group of* CONVEENERS *rush over and smother her with attentions:* "*Oh, Miss Lily, you know me. You've known me for years.*")

SABINA: Go away, boys, go away. I'm after bigger fry than you are. —Why, Mr. Simpson!! How *dare* you!! I expect that even you nobodies must have girls to amuse you; but where you find them and what you do with them, is of absolutely no interest to me.

(*Exit. The* CONVEENERS *squeal with pleasure and stumble in after her. The* FORTUNE TELLER *rises, puts her pipe down on the stool, unfurls her voluminous skirts, gives a sharp wrench to her bodice and strolls towards the audience, swinging her hips like a young woman.*)

FORTUNE TELLER: I tell the future. Keck. Nothing easier. Everybody's future is in their face. Nothing easier.
But who can tell your past,—eh? Nobody!
Your youth,—where did it go? It slipped away while you weren't looking. While you were asleep. While you were drunk? Puh! You're like our friends, Mr. and Mrs. Antrobus; you lie awake nights trying to know your past. What did it mean? What was it trying to say to you?
Think! Think! Split your heads. I can't tell the past and neither can you. If anybody tries to tell you the past, take my word for it, they're charlatans! Charlatans! But I can tell the future.
(*She suddenly barks at a passing chair-pusher.*)
Apoplexy!

(*She returns to the audience.*)

Nobody listens.—Keck! I see a face among you now—I won't embarrass him by pointing him out, but, listen, it may be you: Next year the watchsprings inside you will crumple up. Death by regret,—Type Y. It's in the corners of your mouth. You'll decide that you should have lived for pleasure, but that you missed it. Death by regret,—Type Y. . . . Avoid mirrors. You'll try to be angry,—but no!—no anger.
(*Far forward, confidentially.*)
And now what's the immediate future of our friends, the Antrobuses?- Oh, you've seen it as well as I have, keck,—that dizziness of the head; that Great Man dizziness? The inventor of beer and gunpowder. The sudden fits of temper and then the long stretches of inertia? "I'm a sultan; let my slave-girls fan me."
You know as well as I what's coming. Rain. Rain. Rain in floods. The deluge. But first you'll see shameful things—shameful things. Some of you will be saying: "Let him drown. He's not worth saving. Give the whole thing up." I can see it in your faces. But you're wrong. Keep your doubts and despairs to yourselves.
Again there'll be the narrow escape. The survival of a handful. From destruction,—total destruction.
(*She points sweeping with her hand to the stage.*)
Even of the animals, a few will be saved: two of a kind, male and female, two of a kind.

(*The heads of* CONVEENERS *appear about the stage and in the orchestra pit, jeering at her.*)

CONVEENERS: Charlatan! Madam Kill-joy! Mrs. Jeremiah! Charlatan!

FORTUNE TELLER: And *you!* Mark my words before it's too late. Where'll *you* be?

CONVEENERS: The croaking raven. Old dust and ashes. Rags, bottles, sacks.

FORTUNE TELLER: Yes, stick out your tongues. You can't stick your tongues out far enough to lick the death-sweat from your foreheads. It's too late to work now—bail out the flood with your soup spoons. You've had your chance and you've lost.

CONVEENERS: Enjoy yourselves!!!

(*They disappear. The* FORTUNE TELLER *looks off left and puts her finger on her lip.*)

FORTUNE TELLER: They're coming—the Antrobuses. Keck. Your hope. Your despair. Your selves.

(*Enter from the left,* MR. *and* MRS. ANTROBUS *and* GLADYS.)

MRS. ANTROBUS: Gladys Antrobus, stick your stummick in.

GLADYS: But it's easier this way.

MRS. ANTROBUS: Well, it's too bad the new president has such a clumsy daughter, that's all I can say. Try and be a lady.

FORTUNE TELLER: Aijah! That's been said a hundred billion times.

MRS. ANTROBUS: Goodness! Where's Henry? He was here just a minute ago. Henry!

(*Sudden violent stir. A roller-chair appears from the left. About it are dancing in great excitement* HENRY *and a* NEGRO CHAIR-PUSHER.)

HENRY (*slingshot in hand*): I'll put your eye out. I'll make you yell, like you never yelled before.

NEGRO (*at the same time*): Now, I warns you. I warns you. If you make me mad, you'll get hurt.

ANTROBUS: Henry! What is this? Put down that slingshot.

MRS. ANTROBUS (*at the same time*): Henry! HENRY! Behave yourself.

FORTUNE TELLER: That's right, young man. There are too many people in the world as it is. Everybody's in the way, except one's self.

HENRY: All I wanted to do was—have some fun.

NEGRO: Nobody can't touch my chair, nobody, without I allow 'em to. You get clean away from me and you get away fast.

(*He pushes his chair off, muttering.*)

ANTROBUS: What were you doing, Henry?

HENRY: Everybody's always getting mad. Everybody's always trying to push you around. I'll make him sorry for this; I'll make him sorry.

ANTROBUS: Give me that slingshot.

HENRY: I won't. I'm sorry I came to this place. I wish I weren't here. I wish I weren't anywhere.

MRS. ANTROBUS: Now, Henry, don't get so excited about nothing. I declare I don't know what we're going to do with you. Put your slingshot in your pocket, and don't try to take hold of things that don't belong to you.

ANTROBUS: After this you can stay home. I wash my hands of you.

MRS. ANTROBUS: Come now, let's forget all about it. Everybody take a good breath of that sea air and calm down.
(*A passing* CONVEENER *bows to* ANTROBUS *who nods to him.*)
Who was that you spoke to, George?

ANTROBUS: Nobody, Maggie. Just the candidate who ran against me in the election.

MRS. ANTROBUS: The man who ran against you in the election!!
(*She turns and waves her umbrella after the disappearing* CONVEENER.)
My husband didn't speak to you and he never will speak to you.

ANTROBUS: Now, Maggie.

MRS. ANTROBUS: After those lies you told about him in your speeches! Lies, that's what they were.

GLADYS AND HENRY: Mama, everybody's looking at you. Everybody's laughing at you.

MRS. ANTROBUS: If you must know, my husband's a SAINT, a downright SAINT, and you're not fit to speak to him on the street.

ANTROBUS: Now, Maggie, now, Maggie, that's enough of that.

MRS. ANTROBUS: George Antrobus, you're a perfect worm. If you won't stand up for yourself, I will.

GLADYS: Mama, you just act awful in public.

MRS. ANTROBUS (*laughing*): Well, I must say I enjoyed it. I feel better. Wish his wife had been there to hear it. Children, what do you want to do?

GLADYS: Papa, can we ride in one of those chairs? Mama, I want to ride in one of those chairs.

MRS. ANTROBUS: No, sir. If you're tired you just sit where you are. We have no money to spend on foolishness.

ANTROBUS: I guess we have money enough for a thing like that. It's one of the things you do at Atlantic City.

MRS. ANTROBUS: Oh, we have? I tell you it's a miracle my children have shoes to stand up in. I didn't think I'd ever live to see them pushed around in chairs.

ANTROBUS: We're on a vacation, aren't we? We have a right to some treats, I guess. Maggie, some day you're going to drive me crazy.

MRS. ANTROBUS: All right, go. I'll just sit here and laugh at you. And you can give me my dollar right in my hand. Mark my words, a rainy day is coming. There's a rainy day ahead of us. I feel it in my bones. Go on, throw your money around. I can starve. I've starved before. I know how.

(*A* CONVEENER *puts his head through Turkish Bath window, and says with raised eyebrows:*)

CONVEENER: Hello, George. How are ya? I see where you brought the WHOLE family along.

MRS. ANTROBUS: And what do you mean by that?

(CONVEENER *withdraws head and closes window.*)

ANTROBUS: Maggie, I tell you there's a limit to what I can stand. God's Heaven, haven't I worked *enough?* Don't I get *any* vacation? Can't I even give my children so much as a ride in a roller-chair?

MRS. ANTROBUS (*putting out her hand for raindrops*): Anyway, it's going to rain very soon and you have your broadcast to make.

ANTROBUS: Now, Maggie, I warn you. A man can stand a family only just so long. I'm warning you.

(*Enter* SABINA *from the Bingo-Parlor. She wears a flounced red silk bathing suit, 1905. Red stockings, shoes, parasol. She bows demurely to* ANTROBUS *and starts down the ramp.* ANTROBUS *and the* CHILDREN *stare at her.* ANTROBUS *bows gallantly.*)

MRS. ANTROBUS: Why, George Antrobus, how can you say such a thing! You have the best family in the world.

ANTROBUS: Good morning, Miss Fairweather.

(SABINA *finally disappears behind the beach umbrella or in a cabana in the orchestra pit.*)

MRS. ANTROBUS: Who on earth was that you spoke to, George?

ANTROBUS (*complacent; mock-modest*): Hm . . . m . . . just a . . . solambaka keray.

MRS. ANTROBUS: What? I can't understand you.

GLADYS: Mama, wasn't she beautiful?

HENRY: Papa, introduce her to me.

MRS. ANTROBUS: Children, will you be quiet while I ask your father a simple question?—Who did you say it was, George?

ANTROBUS: Why-uh . . . a friend of mine. Very nice refined girl.

MRS. ANTROBUS: I'm waiting.

ANTROBUS: Maggie, that's the girl I gave the prize to in the beauty contest,—that's Miss Atlantic City 1942.

MRS. ANTROBUS: Hm! She looked like Sabina to me.

HENRY (*at the railing*): Mama, the life-guard knows her, too. Mama, he knows her well.

ANTROBUS: Henry, come here.—She's a very nice girl in every way and the sole support of her aged mother.

MRS. ANTROBUS: So was Sabina, so was Sabina; and it took a wall of ice to open your eyes about Sabina.—Henry, come over and sit down on this bench.

ANTROBUS: She's a very different matter from Sabina. Miss Fairweather is a college graduate, Phi Beta Kappa.

MRS. ANTROBUS: Henry, you sit here by mama. Gladys—

ANTROBUS (*sitting*): Reduced circumstances have required her taking a position as hostess in a Bingo Parlor; but there isn't a girl with higher principles in the country.

MRS. ANTROBUS: Well, let's not talk about it.—Henry, I haven't seen a whale yet.

ANTROBUS: She speaks seven languages and has more culture in her little finger than you've acquired in a lifetime.

MRS. ANTROBUS (*assumed amiability*): All right, all right, George. I'm glad to know there are such superior girls in the Bingo Parlors. —Henry, what's that?
(*Pointing at the storm signal, which has one black disk.*)

HENRY: What is it, Papa?

ANTROBUS: What? Oh, that's the storm signal. One of those black disks means bad weather; two means storm; three means hurricane; and four means the end of the world.

(*As they watch it a second black disk rolls into place.*)

MRS. ANTROBUS: Goodness! I'm going this very minute to buy you all some raincoats.

GLADYS (*putting her cheek against her father's shoulder*): Mama, don't go yet. I like sitting this way. And the ocean coming in and coming in. Papa, don't you like it?

MRS. ANTROBUS: Well, there's only one thing I lack to make me a perfectly happy woman: I'd like to see a whale.

HENRY: Mama, we saw two. Right out there. They're delegates to the convention. I'll find you one.

GLADYS: Papa, ask me something. Ask me a question.

ANTROBUS: Well . . . how big's the ocean?

GLADYS: Papa, you're teasing me. It's—three-hundred and sixty million square-miles—and—it—covers—three-fourths—of—the—earth's—surface—and—its—deepest-place—is—five—and—a—half—miles—deep—and—its—average—depth—is—twelve-thousand—feet. No, Papa, ask me something hard, real hard.

MRS. ANTROBUS (*rising*): Now I'm going off to buy those raincoats. I think that bad weather's going to get worse and worse. I hope it doesn't come before your broadcast. I should think we have about an hour or so.

HENRY: I hope it comes and zzzzzz everything before it. I hope it—

MRS. ANTROBUS: Henry!—George, I think . . . maybe, it's one of those storms that are just as bad on land as on the sea. When you're just as safe and safer in a good stout boat.

HENRY: There's a boat out at the end of the pier.

MRS. ANTROBUS: Well, keep your eye on it. George, you shut your eyes and get a good rest before the broadcast.

ANTROBUS: Thundering Judas, do I have to be told when to open and shut my eyes? Go and buy your raincoats.

MRS. ANTROBUS: Now, children, you have ten minutes to walk around. Ten minutes. And, Henry: control yourself. Gladys, stick by your brother and don't get lost.

(*They run off.*)

MRS. ANTROBUS: Will you be all right, George?

(CONVEENERS *suddenly stick their heads out of the Bingo Parlor and Salt Water Taffy store, and voices rise from the orchestra pit.*)

CONVEENERS: George, Geo-r-r-rge! George! Leave the old hen-coop at home, George. Do-mes-ticated Georgie!

MRS. ANTROBUS (*shaking her umbrella*): Low common oafs! That's what they are. Guess a man has a right to bring his wife to a convention, if he wants to.

(*She starts off.*)
What's the matter with a family, I'd like to know. What else have they got to offer?

(*Exit.* ANTROBUS *has closed his eyes. The* FORTUNE TELLER *comes out of her shop and goes over to the left proscenium. She leans against it watching* SABINA *quizzically.*)

FORTUNE TELLER: Heh! Here she comes!

SABINA (*loud whisper*): What's he doing?

FORTUNE TELLER: Oh, he's ready for you. Bite your lips, dear, take a long breath and come on up.

SABINA: I'm nervous. My whole future depends on this. I'm nervous.

FORTUNE TELLER: Don't be a fool. What more could you want? He's forty-five. His head's a little dizzy. He's just been elected president. He's never known any other woman than his wife. Whenever he looks at her he realizes that she knows every foolish thing he's ever done.

SABINA (*still whispering*): I don't know why it is, but every time I start one of these I'm nervous.

(*The* FORTUNE TELLER *stands in the center of the stage watching the following:*)

FORTUNE TELLER: You make me tired.

SABINA: First tell me my fortune.
(*The* FORTUNE TELLER *laughs drily and makes the gesture of brushing away a nonsensical question.* SABINA *coughs and says:*)
Oh, Mr. Antrobus,—dare I speak to you for a moment?

ANTROBUS: What?—Oh, certainly, certainly, Miss Fairweather.

SABINA: Mr. Antrobus . . . I've been so unhappy. I've wanted . . . I've wanted to make sure that you don't think that I'm the kind of girl who goes out for beauty contests.

FORTUNE TELLER: That's the way!

ANTROBUS: Oh, I understand. I understand perfectly.

FORTUNE TELLER: Give it a little more. Lean on it.

SABINA: I knew you would. My mother said to me this morning: Lily, she said, that fine Mr. Antrobus gave you the prize because he saw at once that you weren't the kind of girl who'd go in for a thing like that. But, honestly, Mr. Antrobus, in this world, honestly, a good girl doesn't know where to turn.

FORTUNE TELLER: Now you've gone too far.

ANTROBUS: My dear Miss Fairweather!

SABINA: You wouldn't know how hard it is. With that lovely wife and daughter you have. Oh, I think Mrs. Antrobus is the finest woman I ever saw. I wish I were like her.

ANTROBUS: There, there. There's . . . uh . . . room for all kinds of people in the world, Miss Fairweather.

SABINA: How wonderful of you to say that. How generous!—Mr. Antrobus, have you a moment free? . . . I'm afraid I may be a little conspicuous here . . . could you come down, for just a moment, to my beach cabana . . . ?

ANTROBUS: Why-uh . . . yes, certainly . . . for a moment . . . just for a moment.

SABINA: There's a deck chair there. Because: you know you *do* look tired. Just this morning my mother said to me: Lily, she said, I hope Mr. Antrobus is getting a good rest. His fine strong face has deep deep lines in it. Now isn't it true, Mr. Antrobus: you work too hard?

FORTUNE TELLER: Bingo!

(*She goes into her shop.*)

SABINA: Now you will just stretch out. No, I shan't say a word, not a word. I shall just sit there,—privileged. That's what I am.

ANTROBUS (*taking her hand*): Miss Fairweather . . . you'll . . . spoil me.

SABINA: Just a moment. I have something I wish to say to the audience.—Ladies and gentlemen. I'm not going to play this particular scene tonight. It's just a short scene and we're going to skip it. But I'll tell you what takes place and then we can continue the play from there on. Now in this scene—

ANTROBUS (*between his teeth*): But, Miss Somerset!

SABINA: I'm sorry. I'm sorry. But I have to skip it. In this scene, I talk to Mr. Antrobus, and at the end of it he decides to leave his wife, get a divorce at Reno and marry me. That's all.

ANTROBUS: Fitz!—Fitz!

SABINA: So that now I've told you we can jump to the end of it,—where you say:

(*Enter in fury* MR. FITZPATRICK, *the stage manager.*)

MR. FITZPATRICK: Miss Somerset, we insist on your playing this scene.

SABINA: I'm sorry, Mr. Fitzpatrick, but I can't and I won't. I've told the audience all they need to know and now we can go on.

(*Other* ACTORS *begin to appear on the stage, listening.*)

MR. FITZPATRICK: And *why* can't you play it?

SABINA: Because there are some lines in that scene that would hurt some people's feelings and I don't think the theatre is a place where people's feelings ought to be hurt.

MR. FITZPATRICK: Miss Somerset, you can pack up your things and go home. I shall call the understudy and I shall report you to Equity.

SABINA: I sent the understudy up to the corner for a cup of coffee and if Equity tries to penalize me I'll drag the case right up to the Supreme Court. Now listen, everybody, there's no need to get excited.

MR. FITZPATRICK *and* ANTROBUS: Why can't you play it . . . What's the matter with the scene?

SABINA: Well, if you must know, I have a personal guest in the audience tonight. Her life hasn't been exactly a happy one. I wouldn't have my friend hear some of these lines for the whole world. I don't suppose it occurred to the author that some other women might have gone through the experience of losing their husbands like this. Wild horses wouldn't drag from me the details of my friend's life, but . . . well, they'd been married twenty years, and before he got rich, why, she'd done the washing and everything.

MR. FITZPATRICK: Miss Somerset, your friend will forgive you. We must play this scene.

SABINA: Nothing, nothing will make me say some of those lines . . . about "a man outgrows a wife every seven years" and . . . and that one about "the Mohammedans being the only people who looked the subject square in the face." Nothing.

MR. FITZPATRICK: Miss Somerset! Go to your dressing room. I'll *read* your lines.

SABINA: Now everybody's nerves are on edge.

MR. ANTROBUS: Skip the scene.

(MR. FITZPATRICK *and the other* ACTORS *go off.*)

SABINA: Thank you. I knew you'd understand. We'll do just what I said. So Mr. Antrobus is going to divorce his wife and marry me. Mr. Antrobus, you say: "It won't be easy to lay all this before my wife."

(*The* ACTORS *withdraw.* ANTROBUS *walks about, his hand to his forehead muttering:*)

ANTROBUS: Wait a minute. I can't get back into it as easily as all that. "My wife is a very obstinate woman." Hm . . . then you say . . . hm . . . Miss Fairweather, I mean Lily, it won't be easy to lay all this before my wife. It'll hurt her feelings a little.

SABINA: Listen, George: *other* people haven't got feelings. Not in the same way that we have,—we who are presidents like you and prize-winners like me. Listen, other people haven't got feelings; they just imagine they have. Within two weeks they go back to playing bridge and going to the movies.
Listen, dear: everybody in the world except a few people like you and me are just people of straw. Most people have no insides at all. Now that you're president you'll see that. Listen, darling, there's a kind of secret society at the top of the world,—like you and me,—that know this. The world was made for us. What's life anyway? Except for two things, pleasure and power, what is life? Boredom! Foolishness. You know it is. Except for those two things, life's nause-at-ing. So,—come here!
(*She moves close. They kiss.*)
So.
Now when your wife comes, it's really very simple; just tell her.

ANTROBUS: Lily, Lily: you're a wonderful woman.

SABINA: Of course I am. .

(*They enter the cabana and it hides them from view. Distant roll of thunder. A third black disk appears on the weather signal. Distant thunder is heard.* MRS. ANTROBUS *appears carrying parcels. She looks about, seats herself on the bench left, and fans herself with her handkerchief. Enter* GLADYS *right, followed by two* CONVEENERS. *She is wearing red stockings.*)

MRS. ANTROBUS: Gladys!

GLADYS: Mama, here I am.

MRS. ANTROBUS: Gladys Antrobus!!! Where did you get those dreadful things?

GLADYS: Wha-a-t? Papa liked the color.

MRS. ANTROBUS: You go back to the hotel this minute!

GLADYS: I won't. I won't. Papa liked the color.

MRS. ANTROBUS: All right. All right. You stay here. I've a good mind to let your father see you that way. You stay right here.

GLADYS: I . . . I don't want to stay if . . . if you don't think he'd like it.

MRS. ANTROBUS: Oh . . . it's all one to me. I don't care what happens. I don't care if the biggest storm in the whole world comes. Let it come.
(*She folds her hands.*)
Where's your brother?

GLADYS (*in a small voice*): He'll be here.

MRS. ANTROBUS: Will he? Well, let him get into trouble. I don't care. I don't know where your father is, I'm sure.

(*Laughter from the cabana.*)

GLADYS (*leaning over the rail*): I think he's . . . Mama, he's talking to the lady in the red dress.

MRS. ANTROBUS: Is that so?
(*Pause.*)
We'll wait till he's through. Sit down here beside me and stop fidgeting . . . what are you crying about?

(*Distant thunder. She covers* GLADYS'S *stockings with a raincoat.*)

GLADYS: You don't like my stockings.

(*Two* CONVEENERS *rush in with a microphone on a standard and various paraphernalia. The* FORTUNE TELLER *appears at the door of her shop. Other characters gradually gather.*)

BROADCAST OFFICIAL: Mrs. Antrobus! Thank God we've found you at last. Where's Mr. Antrobus? We've been hunting everywhere for him. It's about time for the broadcast to the conventions of the world.

MRS. ANTROBUS (*calm*): I expect he'll be here in a minute.

BROADCAST OFFICIAL: Mrs. Antrobus, if he doesn't show up in time, I hope you will consent to broadcast in his place. It's the most important broadcast of the year.

(SABINA *enters from cabana followed by* ANTROBUS.)

MRS. ANTROBUS: No, I shan't. I haven't one single thing to say.

BROADCAST OFFICIAL: Then won't you help us find him, Mrs. Antrobus? A storm's coming up. A hurricane. A deluge!

SECOND CONVEENER (*who has sighted* ANTROBUS *over the rail*): Joe! Joe! Here he is.

BROADCAST OFFICIAL: In the name of God, Mr. Antrobus, you're on the air in five minutes. Will you kindly please come and test the instrument? That's all we ask. If you just please begin the alphabet slowly.

(ANTROBUS, *with set face, comes ponderously up the ramp. He stops at the point where his waist is level with the stage and speaks authoritatively to the* OFFICIALS.)

ANTROBUS: I'll be ready when the time comes. Until then, move away. Go away. I have something I wish to say to my wife.

BROADCASTING OFFICIAL (*whimpering*): Mr. Antrobus! This is the most important broadcast of the year.

(*The* OFFICIALS *withdraw to the edge of the stage.* SABINA *glides up the ramp behind* ANTROBUS.)

SABINA (*whispering*): Don't let her argue. Remember arguments have nothing to do with it.

ANTROBUS: Maggie, I'm moving out of the hotel. In fact, I'm moving out of everything. For good. I'm going to marry Miss Fairweather. I shall provide generously for you and the children. In a few years you'll be able to see that it's all for the best. That's all I have to say.

BROADCAST OFFICIAL: Mr. Antrobus! I hope you'll be ready. This is the most important broadcast of the year.

GLADYS: What did Papa say, Mama? I didn't hear what papa said.

BROADCAST OFFICIAL: Mr. Antrobus. All we want to do is test your voice with the alphabet.

ANTROBUS: Go away. Clear out.

BINGO ANNOUNCER: A—nine; A—nine. D—forty-two; D—forty-two. C—thirty; C—thirty. B—seventeen; B—seventeen. C—forty; C—forty.

CHORUS: Bingo!!

MRS. ANTROBUS (*composedly with lowered eyes*): George, I can't talk to you until you wipe those silly red marks off your face.

ANTROBUS: I think there's nothing to talk about. I've said what I have to say.

SABINA: Splendid!!

ANTROBUS: You're a fine woman, Maggie, but . . . but a man has his own life to lead in the world.

MRS. ANTROBUS: Well, after living with you for five thousand years I guess I have a right to a word or two, haven't I?

ANTROBUS (*to* SABINA): What can I answer to that?

SABINA: Tell her that conversation would only hurt her feelings. It's-kinder-in-the-long-run-to-do-it-short-and-quick.

ANTROBUS: I want to spare your feelings in every way I can, Maggie.

BROADCAST OFFICIAL: Mr. Antrobus, the hurricane signal's gone up. We could begin right now.

MRS. ANTROBUS (*calmly, almost dreamily*): I didn't marry you because you were perfect. I didn't even marry you because I loved you. I married you because you gave me a promise.
(*She takes off her ring and looks at it.*)
That promise made up for your faults. And the promise I gave you made up for mine. Two imperfect people got married and it was the promise that made the marriage.

ANTROBUS: Maggie, . . . I was only nineteen.

MRS. ANTROBUS (*she puts her ring back on her finger*): And when our children were growing up, it wasn't a house that protected them; and it wasn't our love that protected them—it was that promise.
And when that promise is broken—this can happen!

(*With a sweep of the hand she removes the raincoat from* GLADYS' *stockings.*)

ANTROBUS (*stretches out his arm, apoplectic*): Gladys!! Have you gone crazy? Has everyone gone crazy?
(*Turning on* SABINA.)
You did this. You gave them to her.

SABINA: I never said a word to her.

ANTROBUS (*to* GLADYS): You go back to the hotel and take those horrible things off.

GLADYS (*pert*): Before I go, I've got something to tell you,—it's about Henry.

MRS. ANTROBUS (*claps her hands peremptorily*): Stop your noise,—I'm taking her back to the hotel, George. Before I go I have a letter . . . I have a message to throw into the ocean.
(*Fumbling in her handbag.*)
Where is the plagued thing? Here it is.
(*She flings something—invisible to us—far over the heads of the audience to the back of the auditorium.*)
It's a bottle. And in the bottle's a letter. And in the letter is written all the things that a woman knows.
It's never been told to any man and it's never been told to any woman, and if it finds its destination, a new time will come. We're not what books and plays say we are. We're not what advertisements say we are. We're not in the movies and we're not on the radio.

We're not what you're all told and what you think we are: We're ourselves. And if any man can find one of us he'll learn why the whole universe was set in motion. And if any man harm any one of us, his soul—the only soul he's got—had better be at the bottom of that ocean,—and that's the only way to put it. Gladys, come here. We're going back to the hotel.

(*She drags* GLADYS *firmly off by the hand, but* GLADYS *breaks away and comes down to speak to her father.*)

SABINA: Such goings-on. Don't give it a minute's thought.

GLADYS: Anyway, I think you ought to know that Henry hit a man with a stone. He hit one of those colored men that push the chairs and the man's very sick. Henry ran away and hid and some policemen are looking for him very hard. And I don't care a bit if you don't want to have anything to do with mama and me, because I'll never like you again and I hope nobody ever likes you again,—so there!

(*She runs off.* ANTROBUS *starts after her.*)

ANTROBUS: I . . . I have to go and see what I can do about this.

SABINA: You stay right here. Don't you go now while you're excited. Gracious sakes, all these things will be forgotten in a hundred years. Come, now, you're on the air. Just say anything,—it doesn't matter what. Just a lot of birds and fishes and things.

BROADCAST OFFICIAL: Thank you, Miss Fairweather. Thank you very much. Ready, Mr. Antrobus.

ANTROBUS (*touching the microphone*): What is it, what is it? Who am I talking to?

BROADCAST OFFICIAL: Why, Mr. Antrobus! To our order and to all the other orders.

ANTROBUS (*raising his head*): What are all those birds doing?

BROADCAST OFFICIAL: Those are just a few of the birds. Those are the delegates to our convention,—two of a kind.

ANTROBUS (*pointing into the audience*): Look at the water. Look at them all. Those fishes jumping. The children should see this!—There's Maggie's whales!! Here are your whales, Maggie!!

BROADCAST OFFICIAL: I hope you're ready, Mr. Antrobus.

ANTROBUS: And look on the beach! You didn't tell me these would be here!

SABINA: Yes, George. Those are the animals.

BROADCAST OFFICIAL (*busy with the apparatus*): Yes, Mr. Antrobus, those are the vertebrates. We hope the lion will have a word to say when you're through. Step right up, Mr. Antrobus, we're ready. We'll just have time before the storm.
(*Pause. In a hoarse whisper:*)
They're wait-ing.

(*It has grown dark. Soon after he speaks a high whistling noise begins. Strange veering lights start whirling about the stage. The other characters disappear from the stage.*)

ANTROBUS: Friends. Cousins. Four score and ten billion years ago our forefather brought forth upon this planet the spark of life,—

(*He is drowned out by thunder. When the thunder stops the* FORTUNE TELLER *is seen standing beside him.*)

FORTUNE TELLER: Antrobus, there's not a minute to be lost. Don't you see the four disks on the weather signal? Take your family into that boat at the end of the pier.

ANTROBUS: My family? I have no family. Maggie! Maggie! They won't come.

FORTUNE TELLER: They'll come.—Antrobus! Take these animals into that boat with you. All of them,—two of each kind.

SABINA: George, what's the matter with you? This is just a storm like any other storm.

ANTROBUS: Maggie!

SABINA: Stay with me, we'll go . . .
(*Losing conviction.*)
This is just another thunderstorm,—isn't it? Isn't it?

ANTROBUS: Maggie!!!

(MRS. ANTROBUS *appears beside him with* GLADYS.)

MRS. ANTROBUS (*matter-of-fact*): Here I am and here's Gladys.

ANTROBUS: Where've you been? Where have you been? Quick, we're going into that boat out there.

MRS. ANTROBUS: I know we are. But I haven't found Henry.

(*She wanders off into the darkness calling "Henry!"*)

SABINA (*low urgent babbling, only occasionally raising her voice*): I don't believe it. I don't believe it's anything at all. I've seen hundreds of storms like this.

FORTUNE TELLER: There's no time to lose. Go. Push the animals along before you. Start a new world. Begin again.

SABINA: Esmeralda! George! Tell me,—is it really serious?

ANTROBUS (*suddenly very busy*): Elephants first. Gently, gently.—Look where you're going.

GLADYS (*leaning over the ramp and striking an animal on the back*): Stop it or you'll be left behind!

ANTROBUS: Is the Kangaroo there? *There* you are! Take those turtles in your pouch, will you?
(*To some other animals, pointing to his shoulder.*)
Here! You jump up here. You'll be trampled on.

GLADYS (*to her father, pointing below*): Papa, look,—the snakes!

MRS. ANTROBUS: I can't find Henry. Hen-ry!

ANTROBUS: Go along. Go along. Climb on their backs.—Wolves! Jackals,—whatever you are,—tend to your own business!

GLADYS (*pointing, tenderly*): Papa,—look.

SABINA: Mr. Antrobus—take me with you. Don't leave me here. I'll work. I'll help. I'll do anything.

(THREE CONVEENERS *cross the stage, marching with a banner.*)

CONVEENERS: George! What are you scared of?—George! Fellas, it looks like rain.—"Maggie, where's my umbrella?"—George, setting up for Barnum and Bailey?

ANTROBUS (*again catching his wife's hand*): Come on now, Maggie,—the pier's going to break any minute.

MRS. ANTROBUS: I'm not going a step without Henry. Henry!

GLADYS (*on the ramp*): Mama! Papa! Hurry. The pier's cracking, Mama. It's going to break.

MRS. ANTROBUS: Henry! Cain! CAIN!

(HENRY *dashes into the stage and joins his mother.*)

HENRY: Here I am, Mama.

MRS. ANTROBUS: Thank God!—now come quick.

HENRY: I didn't think you wanted me.

MRS. ANTROBUS: Quick!

(*She pushes him down before her into the aisle.*)

SABINA (*all the* ANTROBUSES *are now in the theatre aisle.* SABINA *stands at the top of the ramp*): Mrs. Antrobus, take me. Don't you remember me? I'll work. I'll help. Don't leave me here!

MRS. ANTROBUS (*impatiently, but as though it were of no importance*): Yes, yes. There's a lot of work to be done. Only hurry.

FORTUNE TELLER (*now dominating the stage. To* SABINA *with a grim smile*): Yes, go—back to the kitchen with you.

SABINA (*half-down the ramp. To* FORTUNE TELLER): I don't know why my life's always being interrupted—just when everything's going fine!!

(*She dashes up the aisle.*
Now the CONVEENERS *emerge doing a serpentine dance on the stage. They jeer at the* FORTUNE TELLER.)

CONVEENERS: Get a canoe—there's not a minute to be lost! Tell me my future, Mrs. Croaker.

FORTUNE TELLER: Paddle in the water, boys—enjoy yourselves.

VOICE FROM THE BINGO PARLOR: A-nine; A-nine. C-Twenty-four. C-Twenty-four.

CONVEENERS: Rags, bottles, and sacks.

FORTUNE TELLER: Go back and climb on your roofs. Put rags in the cracks under your doors.—Nothing will keep out the flood. You've had your chance. You've had your day. You've failed. You've lost.

VOICE FROM THE BINGO PARLOR: B-fifteen. B-fifteen.

FORTUNE TELLER (*shading her eyes and looking out to sea*): They're safe. George Antrobus! Think it over! A new world to make,—think it over!

(*The Curtain Falls.*)

Act Three

Just before the curtain rises, two sounds are heard from the stage: a cracked bugle call.

The curtain rises on almost total darkness. Almost all the flats composing the walls of MR. ANTROBUS'S *house, as of Act I, are up, but they lean helter-skelter against one another, leaving irregular gaps. Among the flats missing are two in the back wall, leaving the frames of the windows and door crazily out of line. Off stage, back right, some red Roman fire is burning. The bugle call is repeated. Enter* SABINA *through the tilted door. She is dressed as a Napoleonic camp follower, "la fille du regiment," in begrimed reds and blues.*

SABINA: Mrs. Antrobus! Gladys! Where are you?
The war's over. The war's over. You can come out. The peace treaty's been signed.
Where are they?—Hmpf! Are they dead, too? Mrs. Annnntrobus! Glaaaadus! Mr. Antrobus'll be here this afternoon. I just saw him downtown. Huuuurry and put things in order. He says that now that the war's over we'll all have to settle down and be perfect.

(*Enter* MR. FITZPATRICK, *the stage manager, followed by the whole company, who stand waiting at the edges of the stage.* MR. FITZPATRICK *tries to interrupt* SABINA.)

MR. FITZPATRICK: Miss Somerset, we have to stop a moment.

SABINA: They may be hiding out in the back—

MR. FITZPATRICK: Miss Somerset! We have to stop a moment.

SABINA: What's the matter?

MR. FITZPATRICK: There's an explanation we have to make to the audience.—Lights, please.
(*To the actor who plays* MR. ANTROBUS.)
Will you explain the matter to the audience?

(*The lights go up. We now see that a balcony or elevated runway has been erected at the back of the stage, back of the wall of the Antrobus house. From its extreme right and left ends ladder-like steps descend to the floor of the stage.*)

ANTROBUS: Ladies and gentlemen, an unfortunate accident has taken place back stage. Perhaps I should say *another* unfortunate accident.

SABINA: I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

ANTROBUS: The management feels, in fact, we all feel that you are due an apology. And now we have to ask your indulgence for the most serious mishap of all. Seven of our actors have . . . have been taken ill. Apparently, it was something they ate. I'm not exactly clear what happened.
(*All the* ACTORS *start to talk at once.* ANTROBUS *raises his hand.*)
Now, now—not all at once. Fitz, do you know what it was?

MR. FITZPATRICK: Why, it's perfectly clear. These seven actors had dinner together, and they ate something that disagreed with them.

SABINA: Disagreed with them!!! They have ptomaine poisoning. They're in Bellevue Hospital this very minute in agony. They're having their stomachs pumped out this very minute, in perfect agony.

ANTROBUS: Fortunately, we've just heard they'll all recover.

SABINA: It'll be a miracle if they do, a downright miracle. It was the lemon meringue pie.

ACTORS: It was the fish . . . it was the canned tomatoes . . . it was the fish.

SABINA: It was the lemon meringue pie. I saw it with my own eyes; it had blue mould all over the bottom of it.

ANTROBUS: Whatever it was, they're in no condition to take part in this performance. Naturally, we haven't enough understudies to fill all those roles; but we do have a number of splendid volunteers who have kindly consented to help us out. These friends have watched our rehearsals, and they assure me that they know the lines and the business very well. Let me introduce them to you—my dresser, Mr. Tremayne,—himself a distinguished Shakespearean actor for many years; our wardrobe mistress, Hester; Miss Somerset's maid, Ivy; and Fred Bailey, captain of the ushers in this theatre.

(*These persons bow modestly.* IVY *and* HESTER *are colored girls.*) Now this scene takes place near the end of the act. And I'm sorry to say we'll need a short rehearsal, just a short run-through. And as some of it takes place in the auditorium, we'll have to keep the curtain up. Those of you who wish can go out in the lobby and smoke some more. The rest of you can listen to us, or . . . or just talk quietly among yourselves, as you choose. Thank you. Now will you take it over, Mr. Fitzpatrick?

MR. FITZPATRICK: Thank you.—Now for those of you who are listening perhaps I should explain that at the end of this act, the men have come back from the War and the family's settled down in the house. And the author wants to show the hours of the night passing by over their heads, and the planets crossing the sky . . . uh . . . over their heads. And he says—this is hard to explain—that each of the hours of the night is a philosopher, or a great thinker. Eleven o'clock, for instance, is Aristotle. And nine o'clock is Spinoza. Like that. I don't suppose it means anything. It's just a kind of poetic effect.

SABINA: Not mean anything! Why, it certainly does. Twelve o'clock goes by saying those wonderful things. I think it means that when people are asleep they have all those lovely thoughts, much better than when they're awake.

IVY: Excuse me, I think it means,—excuse me, Mr. Fitzpatrick—

SABINA: What were you going to say, Ivy?

IVY: Mr. Fitzpatrick, you let my father come to a rehearsal; and my father's a Baptist minister, and he said that the author meant that —just like the hours and stars go by over our heads at night, in the same way the ideas and thoughts of the great men are in the air around us all the time and they're working on us, even when we don't know it.

MR. FITZPATRICK: Well, well, maybe that's it. Thank you, Ivy. Anyway,—the hours of the night are philosophers. My friends, are you ready? Ivy, can you be eleven o'clock? "This good estate of the mind possessing its object in energy we call divine." Aristotle.

IVY: Yes, sir. I know that and I know twelve o'clock and I know nine o'clock.

MR. FITZPATRICK: Twelve o'clock? Mr. Tremayne, the Bible.

TREMAYNE: Yes.

MR. FITZPATRICK: Ten o'clock? Hester,—Plato?
(*She nods eagerly.*)
Nine o'clock, Spinoza,—Fred?

BAILEY: Yes, *sir.*

(FRED BAILEY *picks up a great gilded cardboard numeral IX and starts up the steps to the platform.* MR. FITZPATRICK *strikes his forehead.*)

MR. FITZPATRICK: The planets!! We forgot all about the planets.

SABINA: O my God! The planets! Are they sick too?

(ACTORS *nod.*)

MR. FITZPATRICK: Ladies and gentlemen, the planets are singers. Of course, we can't replace them, so you'll have to imagine them singing in this scene. Saturn sings from the orchestra pit down here. The Moon is way up there. And Mars with a red lantern in his hand, stands in the aisle over there—Tz-tz-tz. It's too bad; it all makes a very fine effect. However! Ready—nine o'clock: Spinoza.

BAILEY (*walking slowly across the balcony, left to right*): "After experience had taught me that the common occurrences of daily life are vain and futile—"

FITZPATRICK: Louder, Fred. "And I saw that all the objects of my desire and fear—"

BAILEY: "And I saw that all the objects of my desire and fear were in themselves nothing good nor bad save insofar as the mind was affected by them—"

FITZPATRICK: Do you know the rest? All right. Ten o'clock. Hester. Plato.

HESTER: "Then tell me, O Critias, how will a man choose the ruler that shall rule over him? Will he not—"

FITZPATRICK: Thank you. Skip to the end, Hester.

HESTER: " . . . can be multiplied a thousand fold in its effects among the citizens."

FITZPATRICK: Thank you.—Aristotle, Ivy?

IVY: "This good estate of the mind possessing its object in energy we call divine. This we mortals have occasionally and it is this energy which is pleasantest and best. But God has it always. It is wonderful in us; but in Him how much more wonderful."

FITZPATRICK: Midnight. Midnight, Mr. Tremayne. That's right,—you've done it before.—All right, everybody. You know what you have to do.—Lower the curtain. House lights up. Act Three of THE SKIN OF OUR TEETH.
(*As the curtain descends he is heard saying:*)
You volunteers, just wear what you have on. Don't try to put on the costumes today.

(*House lights go down. The Act begins again. The Bugle call. Curtain rises. Enter* SABINA.)

SABINA: Mrs. Antrobus! Gladys! Where are you?
The war's over.—You've heard all this—
(*She gabbles the main points.*)
Where—are—they? Are—they—dead, too, et cetera.
I—just—saw—Mr.—Antrobus—down town, et cetera.
(*Slowing up:*)
He says that now that the war's over we'll all have to settle down and be perfect. They may be hiding out in the back somewhere. Mrs. An-tro-bus.

(*She wanders off. It has grown lighter.*
A trapdoor is cautiously raised and MRS. ANTROBUS *emerges waist-high and listens. She is disheveled and worn; she wears a tattered dress and a shawl half covers her head. She talks down through the trapdoor.*)

MRS. ANTROBUS: It's getting light. There's still something burning over there—Newark, or Jersey City. What? Yes, I could swear I heard someone moving about up here. But I can't see anybody. I say: I can't see anybody.

(*She starts to move about the stage.* GLADYS' *head appears at the trapdoor. She is holding a* BABY.)

GLADYS: Oh, Mama. Be careful.

MRS. ANTROBUS: Now, Gladys, you stay out of sight.

GLADYS: Well, let me stay here just a minute. I want the baby to get some of this fresh air.

MRS. ANTROBUS: All right, but keep your eyes open. I'll see what I can find. I'll have a good hot plate of soup for you before you can say Jack Robinson. Gladys Antrobus! Do you know what I think I see? There's old Mr. Hawkins sweeping the sidewalk in front of his A. and P. store. Sweeping it with a broom. Why, he must have gone crazy, like the others! I see some other people moving about, too.

GLADYS: Mama, come back, come back.

(MRS. ANTROBUS *returns to the trapdoor and listens.*)

MRS. ANTROBUS: Gladys, there's something in the air. Everybody's movement's sort of different. I see some women walking right out in the middle of the street.

SABINA'S VOICE: Mrs. An-tro-bus!

MRS. ANTROBUS AND GLADYS: What's that?!!

SABINA'S VOICE: Glaaaadys! Mrs. An-tro-bus!

(*Enter* SABINA.)

MRS. ANTROBUS: Gladys, that's Sabina's voice as sure as I live.—Sabina! Sabina!—Are you *alive?!!*

SABINA: Of course, I'm alive. How've you girls been?—*Don't* try and kiss me. I never want to kiss another human being as long as I live. Sh-sh, there's nothing to get emotional about. Pull yourself together, the war's over. Take a deep breath,—the war's over.

MRS. ANTROBUS: The war's over!! I don't believe you. I don't believe you. I can't believe you.

GLADYS: Mama!

SABINA: Who's that?

MRS. ANTROBUS: That's Gladys and her baby. I don't believe you. Gladys, Sabina says the war's over. Oh, Sabina.

SABINA (*leaning over the* BABY): Goodness! Are there any babies left in the world! Can it *see?* And can it cry and everything?

GLADYS: Yes, he can. He notices everything very well.

SABINA: Where on earth did you get it? Oh, I won't ask.—Lord, I've lived all these seven years around camp and I've forgotten how to behave.—Now we've got to think about the men coming home.—Mrs. Antrobus, go and wash your face, I'm ashamed of you. Put your best clothes on. Mr. Antrobus'll be here this afternoon. I just saw him downtown.

MRS. ANTROBUS AND GLADYS: He's alive!! He'll be here!! Sabina, you're not joking?

MRS. ANTROBUS: And Henry?

SABINA (*dryly*): Yes, Henry's alive, too, that's what they say. Now don't stop to talk. Get yourselves fixed up. Gladys, you look terrible. Have you any decent clothes?

(SABINA *has pushed them toward the trapdoor.*)

MRS. ANTROBUS (*half down*): Yes, I've something to wear just for this very day. But, Sabina,—who won the war?

SABINA: Don't stop now,—just wash your face.
(*A whistle sounds in the distance.*)
Oh, my God, what's that silly little noise?

MRS. ANTROBUS: Why, it sounds like . . . it sounds like what used to be the noon whistle at the shoe-polish factory.
(*Exit.*)

SABINA: That's what it is. Seems to me like peacetime's coming along pretty fast—shoe polish!

GLADYS (*half down*): Sabina, how soon after peacetime begins does the milkman start coming to the door?

SABINA: As soon as he catches a cow. Give him time to catch a cow, dear.
(*Exit* GLADYS. SABINA *walks about a moment, thinking.*)
Shoe polish! My, I'd forgotten what peacetime was like.
(*She shakes her head, then sits down by the trapdoor and starts talking down the hole.*)
Mrs. Antrobus, guess what I saw Mr. Antrobus doing this morning at dawn. He was tacking up a piece of paper on the door of the Town Hall. You'll die when you hear: it was a recipe for grass soup, for a grass soup that doesn't give you the diarrhea. Mr. Antrobus is

still thinking up new things.—He told me to give you his love. He's got all sorts of ideas for peacetime, he says. No more laziness and idiocy, he says. And oh, yes! Where are his books? What? Well, pass them up. The first thing he wants to see are his books. He says if you've burnt those books, or if the rats have eaten them, he says it isn't worthwhile starting over again. Everybody's going to be beautiful, he says, and diligent, and very intelligent.

(*A hand reaches up with two volumes.*)

What language is that? Pu-u-gh,—mold! And he's got such plans for you, Mrs. Antrobus. You're going to study history and algebra—and so are Gladys and I—and philosophy. You should hear him talk.

(*Taking two more volumes.*)

Well, these are in English, anyway.—To hear him talk, seems like he expects you to be a combination, Mrs. Antrobus, of a saint and a college professor, and a dancehall hostess, if you know what I mean.

(*Two more volumes.*)

Ugh. German!

(*She is lying on the floor; one elbow bent, her cheek on her hand, meditatively.*)

Yes, peace will be here before we know it. In a week or two we'll be asking the Perkinses in for a quiet evening of bridge. We'll turn on the radio and hear how to be big successes with a new toothpaste. We'll trot down to the movies and see how girls with wax faces live—all *that* will begin again. Oh, Mrs. Antrobus, God forgive me but I enjoyed the war. Everybody's at their best in wartime. I'm sorry it's over. And, oh, I forgot! Mr. Antrobus sent you another message—can you hear me?—

(*Enter* HENRY, *blackened and sullen. He is wearing torn overalls, but has one gaudy admiral's epaulette hanging by a thread from his right shoulder, and there are vestiges of gold and scarlet braid running down his left trouser leg. He stands listening.*)

Listen! Henry's never to put foot in this house again, he says. He'll kill Henry on sight, if he sees him.

You don't know about Henry??? Well, where have you been? What? Well, Henry rose right to the top. Top of *what?* Listen, I'm telling you. Henry rose from corporal to captain, to major, to general.—I don't know how to say it, but the enemy is *Henry;* Henry *is* the enemy. Everybody knows that.

HENRY: He'll kill me, will he?

SABINA: Who are *you?* I'm not afraid of you. The war's over.

HENRY: I'll kill him so fast. I've spent seven years trying to find him; the others I killed were just substitutes.

SABINA: Goodness! It's Henry!—
(*He makes an angry gesture.*)
Oh, I'm not afraid of you. The war's over, Henry Antrobus, and you're not any more important than any other unemployed. You go away and hide yourself, until we calm your father down.

HENRY: The first thing to do is burn up those old books; it's the ideas he gets out of those old books that . . . that makes the whole world so you can't live in it.

(*He reels forward and starts kicking the books about, but suddenly falls down in a sitting position.*)

SABINA: You leave those books alone!! Mr. Antrobus is looking forward to them a-special.—Gracious sakes, Henry, you're so tired you can't stand up. Your mother and sister'll be here in a minute and we'll think what to do about you.

HENRY: What did they ever care about me?

SABINA: There's that old whine again. All you people think you're not loved enough, nobody loves you. Well, you start being lovable and we'll love you.

HENRY (*outraged*): I don't want anybody to love me.

SABINA: Then stop talking about it all the time.

HENRY: I *never* talk about it. The last thing I want is anybody to pay any attention to me.

SABINA: I can hear it behind every word you say.

HENRY: I want everybody to hate me.

SABINA: Yes, you've decided that's second best, but it's still the same thing.—Mrs. Antrobus! Henry's here. He's so tired he can't stand up.

(MRS. ANTROBUS *and* GLADYS, *with her* BABY, *emerge. They are dressed as in Act I.* MRS. ANTROBUS *carries some objects in her apron, and* GLADYS *has a blanket over her shoulder.*)

MRS. ANTROBUS AND GLADYS: Henry! Henry! Henry!

HENRY (*glaring at them*): Have you anything to eat?

MRS. ANTROBUS: Yes, I have, Henry. I've been saving it for this very day,—two good baked potatoes. No! Henry! one of them's for your father. Henry!! Give me that other potato back this minute.

(SABINA *sidles up behind him and snatches the other potato away.*)

SABINA: He's so dog-tired he doesn't know what he's doing.

MRS. ANTROBUS: Now you just rest there, Henry, until I can get your room ready. Eat that potato good and slow, so you can get all the nourishment out of it.

HENRY: You all might as well know right now that I haven't come back here to live.

MRS. ANTROBUS: Sh. . . . I'll put this coat over you. Your room's hardly damaged at all. Your football trophies are a little tarnished, but Sabina and I will polish them up tomorrow.

HENRY: Did you hear me? I don't live here. I don't belong to anybody.

MRS. ANTROBUS: Why, how can you say a thing like that! You certainly do belong right here. Where else would you want to go? Your forehead's feverish, Henry, seems to me. You'd better give me that gun, Henry. You won't need that any more.

GLADYS (*whispering*): Look, he's fallen asleep already, with his potato half-chewed.

SABINA: Puh! The terror of the world.

MRS. ANTROBUS: Sabina, you mind your own business, and start putting the room to rights.

(HENRY *has turned his face to the back of the sofa.* MRS. ANTROBUS *gingerly puts the revolver in her apron pocket, then helps* SABINA. SABINA *has found a rope hanging from the ceiling. Grunting, she hangs all her weight on it, and as she pulls the walls begin to move into their right places.* MRS. ANTROBUS *brings the overturned tables, chairs and hassock into the positions of Act I.*)

SABINA: That's all we do—always beginning again! Over and over again. Always beginning again.
(*She pulls on the rope and a part of the wall moves into place. She stops. Meditatively:*)

How do we know that it'll be any better than before? Why do we go on pretending? Some day the whole earth's going to have to turn cold anyway, and until that time all these other things'll be happening again: it will be more wars and more walls of ice and floods and earthquakes.

MRS. ANTROBUS: Sabina!! Stop arguing and go on with your work.

SABINA: All right. I'll go on just out of *habit*, but I won't believe in it.

MRS. ANTROBUS (*aroused*): Now, Sabina. I've let you talk long enough. I don't want to hear any more of it. Do I have to explain to you what everybody knows,—everybody who keeps a home going? Do I have to say to you what nobody should ever *have* to say, because they can read it in each other's eyes?
Now listen to me:
(MRS. ANTROBUS *takes hold of the rope.*)
I could live for seventy years in a cellar and make soup out of grass and bark, without ever doubting that this world has a work to do and will do it.
Do you hear me?

SABINA (*frightened*): Yes, Mrs. Antrobus.

MRS. ANTROBUS: Sabina, do you see this house,—216 Cedar Street,—do you see it?

SABINA: Yes, Mrs. Antrobus.

MRS. ANTROBUS: Well, just to have known this house is to have seen the idea of what we can do someday if we keep our wits about us. Too many people have suffered and died for my children for us to start reneging now. So we'll start putting this house to rights. Now, Sabina, go and see what you can do in the kitchen.

SABINA: Kitchen! Why is it that however far I go away, I always find myself back in the kitchen?
(*Exit.*)

MRS. ANTROBUS (*still thinking over her last speech, relaxes and says with a reminiscent smile*): Goodness gracious, wouldn't you know that my father was a parson? It was just like I heard his own voice speaking and he's been dead five thousand years. There! I've gone and almost waked Henry up.

HENRY (*talking in his sleep, indistinctly*): Fellows . . . what have they done for us? . . . Blocked our way at every step. Kept everything in their own hands. And you've stood it. When are you going to wake up?

MRS. ANTROBUS: Sh, Henry. Go to sleep. Go to sleep. Go to sleep.—Well, that looks better. Now let's go and help Sabina.

GLADYS: Mama, I'm going out into the backyard and hold the baby right up in the air. And show him that we don't have to be afraid any more.

(*Exit* GLADYS *to the kitchen.*
MRS. ANTROBUS *glances at* HENRY, *exits into kitchen.* HENRY *thrashes about in his sleep. Enter* ANTROBUS, *his arms full of bundles, chewing the end of a carrot. He has a slight limp. Over the suit of Act I he is wearing an overcoat too long for him, its skirts trailing on the ground. He lets his bundles fall and stands looking about. Presently his attention is fixed on* HENRY, *whose words grow clearer.*)

HENRY: All right! What have you got to lose? What have they done for us? That's right—nothing. Tear everything down. I don't care what you smash. We'll begin again and we'll show 'em.
(ANTROBUS *takes out his revolver and holds it pointing downwards. With his back towards the audience he moves toward the footlights.* HENRY'S *voice grows louder and he wakes with a start. They stare at one another. Then* HENRY *sits up quickly. Throughout the following scene* HENRY *is played, not as a misunderstood or misguided young man, but as a representation of strong unreconciled evil.*)
All right! Do something.
(*Pause.*)
Don't think I'm afraid of you, either. All right, do what you were going to do. Do it.
(*Furiously.*)
Shoot me, I tell you. You don't have to think I'm any relation of yours. I haven't got any father or any mother, or brothers or sisters. And I don't want any. And what's more I haven't got anybody over me; and I never will have. I'm alone, and that's all I want to be: alone. So you can shoot me.

ANTROBUS: You're the last person I wanted to see. The sight of you dries up all my plans and hopes. I wish I were back at war still, because it's easier to fight you than to live with you. War's a pleasure—do you hear me?—War's a pleasure compared to what faces us now: trying to build up a peacetime with you in the middle of it.

(ANTROBUS *walks up to the window.*)

HENRY: I'm not going to be a part of any peacetime of yours. I'm going a long way from here and make my own world that's fit for a man to live in. Where a man can be free, and have a chance, and do what he wants to do in his own way.

ANTROBUS (*his attention arrested; thoughtfully. He throws the gun out of the window and turns with hope*): . . . Henry, let's try again.

HENRY: Try what? Living *here?*—Speaking polite downtown to all the old men like you? Standing like a sheep at the street corner until the red light turns to green? Being a good boy and a good sheep, like all the stinking ideas you get out of your books? Oh, no. I'll make a world, and I'll show you.

ANTROBUS (*hard*): How can you make a world for people to live in, unless you've first put order in yourself? Mark my words: I shall continue fighting you until my last breath as long as you mix up your idea of liberty with your idea of hogging everything for yourself. I shall have no pity on you. I shall pursue you to the far corners of the earth. You and I want the same thing; but until you think of it as something that everyone has a right to, you are my deadly enemy and I will destroy you.—I hear your mother's voice in the kitchen. Have you seen her?

HENRY: I have no mother. Get it into your head. I don't belong here. I have nothing to do here. I have no home.

ANTROBUS: Then why did you come here? With the whole world to choose from, why did you come to this one place: 216 Cedar Street, Excelsior, New Jersey. . . . Well?

HENRY: What if I did? What if I wanted to look at it once more, to see if—

ANTROBUS: Oh, you're related, all right—When your mother comes in you must behave yourself. Do you hear me?

HENRY (*wildly*): What is this?—*must behave* yourself. Don't you say *must* to me.

ANTROBUS: Quiet!

(*Enter* MRS. ANTROBUS *and* SABINA.)

HENRY: Nobody can say *must* to me. All my life everybody's been crossing me,—everybody, everything, all of you. I'm going to be free, even if I have to kill half the world for it. Right now, too. Let me get my hands on his throat. I'll show him.

(*He advances toward* ANTROBUS. *Suddenly,* SABINA *jumps between them and calls out in her own person:*)

SABINA: Stop! Stop! Don't play this scene. You know what happened last night. Stop the play.
(*The men fall back, panting.* HENRY *covers his face with his hands.*)
Last night you almost strangled him. You became a regular savage. Stop it!

HENRY: It's true. I'm sorry. I don't know what comes over me. I have nothing against him personally. I respect him very much . . . I . . . I admire him. But something comes over me. It's like I become fifteen years old again. I . . . I . . . listen: my own father used to whip me and lock me up every Saturday night. I never had enough to eat. He never let me have enough money to buy decent clothes. I was ashamed to go downtown. I never could go to the dances. My father and my uncle put rules in the way of everything I wanted to do. They tried to prevent my living at all.—I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

MRS. ANTROBUS (*quickly*): No, go on. Finish what you were saying. Say it all.

HENRY: In this scene it's as though I were back in High School again. It's like I had some big emptiness inside me,—the emptiness of being hated and blocked at every turn. And the emptiness fills up with the one thought that you have to strike and fight and kill. Listen, it's as though you have to kill somebody else so as not to end up killing yourself.

SABINA: That's not true. I knew your father and your uncle and your mother. You imagined all that. Why, they did everything they could for you. How can you say things like that? They didn't lock you up.

HENRY: They did. They did. They wished I hadn't been born.

SABINA: That's not true.

ANTROBUS (*in his own person, with self-condemnation, but cold and proud*): Wait a minute. I have something to say, too. It's not wholly

his fault that he wants to strangle me in this scene. It's my fault, too. He wouldn't feel that way unless there were something in me that reminded him of all that. He talks about an emptiness. Well, there's an emptiness in me, too. Yes,—work, work, work,—that's all I do. I've ceased to *live*. No wonder he feels that anger coming over him.

MRS. ANTROBUS: There! At least you've said it.

SABINA: We're all just as wicked as we can be, and that's the God's truth.

MRS. ANTROBUS (*nods a moment, then comes forward; quietly*): Come. Come and put your head under some cold water.

SABINA (*in a whisper*): I'll go with him. I've known him a long while. You have to go on with the play. Come with me.

(HENRY *starts out with* SABINA, *but turns at the exit and says to* ANTROBUS:)

HENRY: Thanks. Thanks for what you said. I'll be all right tomorrow. I won't lose control in that place. I promise.

(*Exeunt* HENRY *and* SABINA.
ANTROBUS *starts toward the front door, fastens it.*
MRS. ANTROBUS *goes up stage and places the chair close to table.*)

MRS. ANTROBUS: George, do I see you limping?

ANTROBUS: Yes, a little. My old wound from the other war started smarting again. I can manage.

MRS. ANTROBUS (*looking out of the window*): Some lights are coming on,—the first in seven years. People are walking up and down looking at them. Over in Hawkins' open lot they've built a bonfire to celebrate the peace. They're dancing around it like scarecrows.

ANTROBUS: A bonfire! As though they hadn't seen enough things burning.—Maggie,—the dog died?

MRS. ANTROBUS: Oh, yes. Long ago. There are no dogs left in Excelsior.—You're back again! All these years. I gave up counting on letters. The few that arrived were anywhere from six months to a year late.

ANTROBUS: Yes, the ocean's full of letters, along with the other things.

MRS. ANTROBUS: George, sit down, you're tired.

ANTROBUS: No, you sit down. I'm tired but I'm restless.
(*Suddenly, as she comes forward:*)
Maggie! I've lost it. I've lost it.

MRS. ANTROBUS: What, George? What have you lost?

ANTROBUS: The most important thing of all: The desire to begin again, to start building.

MRS. ANTROBUS (*sitting in the chair right of the table*): Well, it will come back.

ANTROBUS (*at the window*): I've lost it. This minute I feel like all those people dancing around the bonfire—just relief. Just the desire to settle down; to slip into the old grooves and keep the neighbors from walking over my lawn.—Hm. But during the war,—in the middle of all that blood and dirt and hot and cold—every day and night, I'd have moments, Maggie, when I *saw* the things that we could do when it was over. When you're at war you think about a better life; when you're at peace you think about a more comfortable one. I've lost it. I feel sick and tired.

MRS. ANTROBUS: Listen! The baby's crying.
I hear Gladys talking. Probably she's quieting Henry again. George, while Gladys and I were living here—like moles, like rats, and when we were at our wits' end to save the baby's life—the only thought we clung to was that you were going to bring something good out of this suffering. In the night, in the dark, we'd whisper about it, starving and sick.—Oh, George, you'll have to get it back again. Think! What else kept us alive all these years? Even now, it's not comfort we want. We can suffer whatever's necessary; only give us back that promise.

(*Enter* SABINA *with a lighted lamp. She is dressed as in Act I.*)

SABINA: Mrs. Antrobus . . .

MRS. ANTROBUS: Yes, Sabina?

SABINA: Will you need me?

MRS. ANTROBUS: No, Sabina, you can go to bed.

SABINA: Mrs. Antrobus, if it's all right with you, I'd like to go to the bonfire and celebrate seeing the war's over. And, Mrs. Antrobus, they've opened the Gem Movie Theatre and they're giving away a hand-painted soup tureen to every lady, and I thought one of us ought to go.

ANTROBUS: Well, Sabina, I haven't any money. I haven't seen any money for quite a while.

SABINA: Oh, you don't need money. They're taking anything you can give them. And I have some . . . some . . . Mrs. Antrobus, promise you won't tell anyone. It's a little against the law. But I'll give you some, too.

ANTROBUS: What is it?

SABINA: I'll give you some, too. Yesterday I picked up a lot of . . . of beef-cubes!

(MRS. ANTROBUS *turns and says calmly:*)

MRS. ANTROBUS: But, Sabina, you know you ought to give that in to the Center downtown. They know who needs them most.

SABINA (*outburst*): Mrs. Antrobus, I didn't make this war. I didn't ask for it. And, in my opinion, after anybody's gone through what we've gone through, they have a right to grab what they can find. You're a very nice man, Mr. Antrobus, but you'd have got on better in the world if you'd realized that dog-eat-dog was the rule in the beginning and always will be. And most of all now.
(*In tears.*)
Oh, the world's an awful place, and you know it is. I used to think something could be done about it; but I know better now. I hate it. I hate it.
(*She comes forward slowly and brings six cubes from the bag.*)
All right. All right. You can have them.

ANTROBUS: Thank you, Sabina.

SABINA: Can I have . . . can I have one to go to the movies?
(ANTROBUS *in silence gives her one.*)
Thank you.

ANTROBUS: Good night, Sabina.

SABINA: Mr. Antrobus, don't mind what I say. I'm just an ordinary girl, you know what I mean, I'm just an ordinary girl. But you're a bright man, you're a very bright man, and of course you invented the alphabet and the wheel, and, my God, a lot of things . . . and if you've got any other plans, my God, don't let me upset them. Only every now and then I've got to go to the movies. I mean my nerves can't stand it. But if you have any ideas about improving the crazy old world, I'm really with you. I really am. Because it's . . . it's . . . Good night.

(*She goes out.* ANTROBUS *starts laughing softly with exhilaration.*)

ANTROBUS: Now I remember what three things always went together when I was able to see things most clearly: three things. Three things:
(*He points to where* SABINA *has gone out.*)
The voice of the people in their confusion and their need. And the thought of you and the children and this house. . . And . . . Maggie! I didn't dare ask you: my books! They haven't been lost, have they?

MRS. ANTROBUS: No. There are some of them right here. Kind of tattered.

ANTROBUS: Yes.—Remember, Maggie, we almost lost them once before? And when we finally did collect a few torn copies out of old cellars they ran in everyone's head like a fever. They as good as rebuilt the world.
(*Pauses, book in hand, and looks up.*)
Oh, I've never forgotten for long at a time that living is struggle. I know that every good and excellent thing in the world stands moment by moment on the razor-edge of danger and must be fought for—whether it's a field, or a home, or a country. All I ask is the chance to build new worlds and God has always given us that. And has given us (*opening the book*) voices to guide us; and the memory of our mistakes to warn us. Maggie, you and I will remember in peacetime all the resolves that were so clear to us in the days of war. We've come a long ways. We've learned. We're learning. And the steps of our journey are marked for us here.
(*He stands by the table turning the leaves of a book.*)
Sometimes out there in the war,—standing all night on a hill—I'd try and remember some of the words in these books. Parts of them and phrases would come back to me. And after a while I used to give names to the hours of the night.

(*He sits, hunting for a passage in the book.*)
Nine o'clock I used to call Spinoza. Where is it: "After experience had taught me—"

(*The back wall has disappeared, revealing the platform.* FRED BAILEY *carrying his numeral has started from left to right.* MRS. ANTROBUS *sits by the table sewing.*)

BAILEY: "After experience had taught me that the common occurrences of daily life are vain and futile; and I saw that all the objects of my desire and fear were in themselves nothing good nor bad save insofar as the mind was affected by them; I at length determined to search out whether there was something truly good and communicable to man."

(*Almost without break* HESTER, *carrying a large Roman numeral ten, starts crossing the platform.* GLADYS *appears at the kitchen door and moves towards her mother's chair.*)

HESTER: "Then tell me, O Critias, how will a man choose the ruler that shall rule over him? Will he not choose a man who has first established order in himself, knowing that any decision that has its spring from anger or pride or vanity can be multiplied a thousand fold in its effects upon the citizens?"

(HESTER *disappears and* IVY, *as eleven o'clock starts speaking.*)

IVY: "This good estate of the mind possessing its object in energy we call divine. This we mortals have occasionally and it is this energy which is pleasantest and best. But God has it always. It is wonderful in us; but in Him how much more wonderful."

(*As* MR. TREMAYNE *starts to speak,* HENRY *appears at the edge of the scene, brooding and unreconciled, but present.*)

TREMAYNE: "In the beginning, God created the Heavens and the earth; And the Earth was waste and void; And the darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Lord said let there be light and there was light."

(*Sudden black-out and silence, except for the last strokes of the midnight bell. Then just as suddenly the lights go up, and* SABINA *is standing at the window, as at the opening of the play.*)

SABINA: Oh, oh, oh. Six o'clock and the master not home yet. Pray God nothing serious has happened to him crossing the Hudson

River. But I wouldn't be surprised. The whole world's at sixes and sevens, and why the house hasn't fallen down about our ears long ago is a miracle to me.
(*She comes down to the footlights.*)
This is where you came in. We have to go on for ages and ages yet. You go home.
The end of this play isn't written yet.
Mr. and Mrs. Antrobus! Their heads are full of plans and they're as confident as the first day they began,—and they told me to tell you: good night.

Of all forms of literary criticism none occupies a more precarious yet responsible position than dramatic criticism. Much of the criticism that the average Broadway play will receive is written only a few hours after the final curtain has fallen on its first-night performance. It is the product, not of any careful, deliberate textual study, but of first impressions by a half-dozen or so critics, highly trained and perceptive observers of a living theatrical performance. It has become almost a sacred Broadway tradition that criticism should be written in a taxicab racing to a newspaper office to meet a deadline for the morning edition. The responsibility of the New York critics is staggering, for upon their judgment of play and performance largely rests the success of the production. A financial investment totaling thousands of dollars, employment for the actors and crew, and a playwright's reputation often ride on those first notices. This is not to suggest that such criticism is arbitrary or capricious; on the contrary, most of it is thoughtful and discriminating and some of it is brilliant.

These circumstances, however, produce quite a different brand of commentary than that based, for example, on the body of historical and literary criticism accumulated over the years around Ibsen, Chekhov, and Shaw. As the drama critics left the Plymouth Theater after the first performance of *The Skin of Our Teeth* on November 18, 1942, there were no respectable critical precedents which they could use to substantiate their opinions or behind which

they could hide. Therefore the reviews were, as one might expect, highly contradictory and provocative.

Excerpts from these first-night notices have been included here, not to show that there are no absolutes in dramatic criticism nor to imply that all criticism is therefore whimsical and subjective, but to provide a group of considered opinions against which we can measure our own. In one sense, the student is at a disadvantage, for he may not have seen the actual stage performance which must be the ultimate test of any play; but, on the other hand, he does have a singular advantage over the Broadway critics because with the text at hand and the privilege of re-reading he is able to form a more deliberate judgment on the play as *dramatic literature* without the exigencies of time pressing upon him. Nor will the student have to aim his criticism at a particular reading public, as newspaper critics to some extent must do.

Without any textual analysis of *The Skin of Our Teeth* as an aid, the student is actually facing the situation that confronts him when he leaves the classroom. The reviews may be of help, but are never a substitute for the critical experience that comes only with reading and studying dramatic literature and attending the theater. From such experience is derived the ability to form criteria and to judge independently. Clearly, it is impossible for one to agree with all of the diametrically opposed and outspoken opinions that follow. As qualified readers, we are now in a position to criticize the professional critics, who, although they are acknowledged experts, do not have any claim to final and definitive judgments. If their evaluations, like ours, are to be valid, they must be founded not on subjective whims or prejudices (although sensitivity and taste are not to be overlooked), but upon an honest, intelligent, and judicious understanding of the play. If a survey of the contradictory evaluations of this or any play causes the reader to feel a sense of frustration because there are no "right answers," the solution is simply to return to the text itself, which contains the only ultimate answers that can ever be given on it.

Before the play began, the première audience at *The Skin of Our Teeth* had nothing to go on but the program notes prepared by an understandably nervous management:

> *The Skin of Our Teeth* is a comedy about George Antrobus, his wife and two children, and their general utility maid, Lily Sabina, all of Excelsior, New Jersey. George Antrobus is John Doe or George Spelvin or you — the average American at grips with a destiny sometimes sour, sometimes sweet. The Antrobuses have survived fire, flood, pestilence, the seven-year locusts, the ice age, the black pox and the

double feature, a dozen wars and as many depressions. They have run many a gamut, are as durable as radiators, and look upon the future with a disarming optimism. Ultimately bewitched, befuddled and becalmed, they are the stuff of which heroes are made — heroes and buffoons. They are true offspring of Adam and Eve, victims of all the ills that flesh is heir to. They have survived a thousand calamities by the skin of their teeth, and Mr. Wilder's play is a tribute to their indestructibility.

One Broadway critic, Wilella Waldorf, of the New York *Post,* however, was ready to return the notes to the producer:

> That's what the management says.
>
> Maybe so. It seems more probable, however, that "The Skin of Our Teeth" is actually less abstruse. Mr. Wilder must simply have decided one night that if Olsen and Johnson can get away with what they've been doing in the theatre all these years, there is no good reason why Thornton Wilder shouldn't turn out something of the kind, with a dash of philosophy tossed in here and there to remind us that he has, after all, a reputation for profound and lofty thinking . . . .
>
> Mr. Wilder goes to some trouble to indicate that the Antrobuses are actually Adam and Eve, and that their son, an aggressive youth handy with a sling-shot, is named Cain. Moses comes into the first act, and there is a good deal of rebuilding-the-world-after-the-war talk later on, with overtones from the philosophers just out the window. This may set some people a-worrying about allegorical significance and kindred subjects, but "The Skin of Our Teeth" actually is neither a profound nor particularly impressive drama.
>
> It is merely a stunt show with everything tossed into it that the author could dream up. Like all wacky extravaganzas it doesn't always come off, and it is occasionally rather dull, but the evening is saved by some good performances in the leading roles, and especially by the fact that Miss Bankhead is on hand to chatter and flounce her way through the ages, complaining bitterly to the audience every thousand years or so.

Burton Rascoe, of the New York *World-Telegram,* was considerably kinder but for quite contrary reasons:

> Mr. Wilder has, indeed, learned enough about the theater to know that it is a medium of entertainment first and of instruction and edification afterwards; and so, in his new play, he kids the life out of his pseudo-philosophic manner and kids life into a play that is genuinely philosophical.
>
> In taking a tip from *Hellzapoppin',* he has learned that he can slip over on the audience the most serious message that he or anybody else can give in these pessimism-inducing times without having the audience walk out on him and the critics asking rhetorically in their critiques: "What's this hogwash all about?" In various ways Miss

Bankhead has asked that same question so many times (and with such hilarious response from the audience each time) during the first act, that by the time the curtain goes down for the intermission you are devoutly hoping that the author won't go serious on you in the next act and pull one of these what-is-its of the drama which is known as a fantasy, and usually is something dreary and unpleasant or so sweet you feel like crying for a shot of insulin. You are hoping, indeed, that you won't ever know what the play is about, being quite content that it should keep on being crazy and funny.

The message of *The Skin of Our Teeth* is a rebuke to our contemporary prophets of doom and an encouraging reminder that since the first man and his wife appeared on earth he and their descendants have, as the program note seriously understates, "survived fire, flood, pestilence, the seven-year locusts, the ice age, the black pox and the double feature, and as many depressions" and odds are heavily in favor of their surviving the present world catastrophe. Incidentally, there is the profound observation that, curiously enough, people are the noblest of their lives in time of war — sacrificing, aspiring, working in harmony and unselfishly, dreaming and hoping for a better world, full of heroic high resolve — and, then, when they have peace, security, leisure, they slip back into the old habits of human beings. And yet, says Mr. Wilder, the torch of progress and high aspiration is passed on after each catastrophe through books and the thoughts embodied in them by the philosophers, scientists, poets and artists . . . .

In my opinion this is the best play the war is likely to produce. Certainly it is bound to be the most comforting.

If Mr. Rascoe liked the play because it stayed thoroughly amusing as entertainment, John Anderson, of the New York *Journal American,* thought the fun obscured a seriously challenging theme; he would have preferred Wilder somberly to develop the exalting "tragic core" of his drama:

Yet it seems to me that the fun is too often superficial, that it touches no serious depths of emotion, so that the play fails to reach the wrenching intensity for which its laughter should be a profound release. Mr. Wilder takes a challenging theme and uses it for momentary effects with gadgets that are more theatrical than imaginative. It has a funny-paper inventiveness which finally gets in the way of what Mr. Wilder is trying to say . . . .

The terms Mr. Wilder has chosen to express this heroic optimism are clever, immediately challenging, and pictorially effective. Where he transcended space in "Our Town" and made his New England village a simple pattern of the whole world he has here kaleidoscoped time, and in Mr. and Mrs. Antrobus, of Excelsior, New Jersey, he has snapshotted the human family of all ages. He has outdone the classical unities by boiling them in Einstein . . . .

The Antrobus son is firmly called Henry to disguise the fact that he is really Cain, yet even in their moment of deepest dejection and grief they protect Cain, knowing the sorrow he will cause again and again in bathing the earth in blood.

It is in handling this, the tragic core of the play (since it is the fate humanity must triumph over), that Mr. Wilder seems to me too glib to be either searching or truly effective. Though his world is again in smoking ruins, and though Cain is back in the protective shelter of his own house (safe in the heart of the human race) Mr. Antrobus struggles up, clinging to a few printed pages of wisdom — trying to build his dream all over again on the ashes of his perpetual disillusion.

It is a valiant gesture, almost foolhardy in its unflinching purpose, and yet it doesn't hold much stature against the rest of the play, against the careful fantasy and occasional cuteness which Mr. Wilder indulges in for the general tone. It lacks scale, and so misses the exaltation which, however temporary, an audience of Antrobuses has a right to feel for a brief moment, even in their own tear-strewn merriment. We are asked to laugh at the cosmic kick in the pants, without feeling the pain.

Louis Kronenberger, writing for *PM,* considered the first act much the best and believed that by the third the drama had come to a standstill:

Dramatically Mr. Wilder cannot sustain what he sets out to do. Only his first act has a real freshness and lift, partly because everything is still new and sudden and amusingly incongruous, but partly because it is full of impudent monkeyshines that, besides being hilarious in themselves, act as a kind of fourth-dimensional commentary on the illogic of man's experiences. The play, after that, starts bumping up and down. There are still hilarious moments, but the humor on the whole is less frequent and more forced. Since there is no narrative worth mentioning, it is only by fresh spurts of the imagination that the play can sail ahead, and the spurts are not many. By the third act, the play bogs down in talk, and Mr. Wilder even succumbs to the temptation of orchestrating his theme with some pretty set speeches . . . .

For Howard Barnes, of the New York *Herald Tribune,* conversely, the third act was worth the whole play:

To some it may seem that Wilder is having fun at an audience's expense in his cockeyed panorama of human existence. There are several supposedly antic touches in the exposition which are definitely hard to take. When the play flames up in moments of great eloquence and imagery, though, it needs neither glossary nor an approach of detached amusement. "The Skin of Our Teeth" is wonderfully wise as well as wacky. It uses the language of the theater triumphantly to make its points.

> Like all daring and exciting works of art, it is rewarding in just such measure as one wishes to find it so. Viewed merely as a prank, it is frequently amusing, but often wearisome. Contemplated as a sometimes stuttering but splendidly sincere attempt to make some sense out of this poor old world, it is a challenging and unforgettable communication between a group of artists and spectators. The final act, with its trenchant observations on the current scene, would have sufficed by itself to have made "The Skin of Our Teeth" a glowing play. With the satirical matter that is woven into earlier scenes, the show has real dimensions . . . .

But George Jean Nathan would have very little of it at any time in any mood.

> This play once again reinforces the conviction that Thornton Wilder remains merely a talented dilettante. Apparently determined at all costs to be different, his stage writing, while it accomplishes that end, does not succeed in investing the difference with enough weight to give it an even relative importance. He is at times agreeably humorous; he is at moments remotely inventive; he is at times even moderately moving. But it is all on the surface; there is little or no plumbing of the depths; and the final impression, after the pleasant little moments have been forgotten, is of one of those imitation gold bracelets hung with newfangled charms that one sees in the so-called novelty shops. It is pretty and it is cute, but it isn't the real article, and its novelty very quickly wears off . . . .

The years have shown Mr. Nathan's last remark to be rather too sweeping, for 1955 brought a full-scale revival of the play here and abroad. We today, however, have one advantage denied the critics of 1942 — perspective. The shock and surprise at the novelty have worn off for those now thoroughly familiar with it, although perhaps not for one viewing the play for the first time. But the last decade has shown that the play has more than the surface appeal of entertainment and has a theme that is not significant only in the dark days of a world at war. Today we can see more clearly that whatever judgments ultimately are made about *The Skin of Our Teeth* must not attempt to separate the external theatrical form from its thematic content. The artistic unity of the drama defies any such easy dichotomy. Brooks Atkinson, writing in the New York *Times* of August 7, 1955, can thus add a new dimension to the criticism of Wilder's play because thirteen years have given him the advantage of an aesthetic distance. It is significant that Mr. Atkinson's verdict should be more favorable than any rendered in 1942, for every play needs to be reassessed at every reading and every performance.

The breezy form gives the impression that mankind carries forward its ancient and honorable traditions unconsciously in the midst of squalor, vulgarity and muddle — never aware of its spiritual valor. In this way the slapstick form provides perspective.

In 1942, after the anxious years of the depression and in the depths of World War II, "The Skin of Our Teeth" was a tonic . . . . Thirteen years later, the play is still a vital piece of dramatic literature. Even when detached from the emergencies of its own period, it has intellectual stature. It is an expression of faith by a man of knowledge and principle. It reflects some of the light referred to in the quotation from Genesis that brings the story to a close — "And the Lord said, let there be light and there was light." When he was writing his play Mr. Wilder caught some of the light.

QUESTIONS

1. What are the various theatrical devices that Wilder uses in Act One to baffle an unsuspecting audience?
2. What is the playwright alluding to on page 700 when he says that Mrs. Antrobus "invented the apron on which so many interesting changes have been rung since"? What other similar allusions are there in Act One?
3. What are the pertinent facts of exposition derived from the announcer and Sabina? Why all the apparent irrelevancies, such as the location of the Antrobus home near an A.&P. or Mr. Antrobus' scars?
4. What is the function of Sabina's interrupting the dialogue to address the audience?
5. List all the anachronisms and incongruities in the play up to the time of Mr. Antrobus' arrival. What is the author's purpose in introducing them?
6. How would you direct the scene in Act One in which the Refugees appear? With a stage full of people, how can you keep these minor characters from appearing wooden and lifeless?
7. Since Moses, Homer, and the Muses have no direct relationship to the Antrobuses' present dilemma, why are they included in the play?
8. Discuss the theatrical effectiveness of the curtain scene in Act One. How does it help Wilder's theme to emerge more clearly?
9. How does the prophecy of the Fortune Teller establish the variations on the theme developed in Act Two?
10. In Act Two what is the symbolic meaning of (a) the set; (b) the conveeners; (c) the Fortune Teller; (d) the convention speeches of Mr. and Mrs. Antrobus?
11. What new light is shed on the character of each of the Antrobuses during Act Two?
12. What functions are served by the minor characters in each act?

13. Evaluate the analysis of the function of the hours that is spoken by Ivy on page 754.
14. What reasons could there be for Wilder's going through the elaborate stage business of the interruption and rehearsal in Act Three?
15. Act Three takes place immediately after World War II, or after any and all of the wars of mankind. What traditional attitudes toward peace are dramatized here?
16. What is the dramatist's purpose in revealing the character of the boy playing the part of Henry in the quarrel on pages 764-766?
17. What is the dominant tone of each act?
18. Discuss the range of the historical and mythical allusions in the play as a whole. Does the dramatist's theme gain or lose impact because of such a multiplicity of references?
19. The Broadway critics are sharply divided on the tonal unity of *The Skin of Our Teeth*. What reasons might Wilder have had for combining a serious theme with a novel and amusing dramatic style?
20. In the absence of a conventional plot, on what unifying principle are the three acts organized?
21. What happens to the character of Henry in the course of the play? How is he made a significant part of Wilder's meaning?
22. Discuss the various people and symbols represented in each of the Antrobuses and in Sabina. All these characters also represent traits of character that Wilder considers universal. Illustrate.
23. What is Wilder satirizing in Sabina's opening scene? What other elements of satire are there in *The Skin of Our Teeth?*
24. Compare and contrast Synge and Wilder as dramatic satirists. Which seems to you to be the more successful artist? Why?
25. Wilder's play, like *Come Back, Little Sheba* and *Anna Christie,* creates the illusion that the play does not end with the final curtain; Wilder, in fact, even omits the curtain. What major differences in theme and tone are achieved by this dramatic effect in these plays?

GENERAL BIBLIOGRAPHY AND GLOSSARY

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GLOSSARY

antagonist. The character who most directly and forcefully opposes the protagonist, or main character.

attitude. The emotions, feelings, or state of mind of a character, the dramatist, or the audience.

backdrop. The rear curtain of a stage setting.

climax. The most intense point of conflict in a play; the turning point in the action.

comedy of manners. A comedy which wittily satirizes the foibles and artificialities of sophisticated characters in fashionable society.

curtain scene. The last moments of action before the curtain falls on a scene.

denouement. The resolution or final working out of the complications of the plot.

dialogue. The conversation between or among characters.

diction. The words the dramatist chooses, considered in regard to their connotations (i.e., their suggestive or associative value).

downstage. At or toward the front of the stage.

dramatic irony. Irony which exists when the audience is aware of facts or a situation of which the characters on stage are ignorant.

exposition. The process of providing an audience the information necessary for understanding the background of the story.

expressionism. The dramatic representation of a subjective emotion or psychological state of mind by means of an objective stage technique, such as use of lighting, scenery, or properties.

foil. A minor character used to set off a major one more distinctly by sharp contrast.

foreshadowing. The indication of an action which is to occur later in the play.

function. The contribution made by character, scene, symbol, dialogue, stage property, and so on, to the achievement of the dramatist's total effect. In dramatic art everything should exist

for a purpose, not for its own sake or merely for decoration; it should be integrally related to the total unity of the play.

imagery. Comparisons used for their associative, connotative, and emotional significance. Expressed comparisons are similes; implied comparisons are metaphors.

melodrama. A play which places emphasis on complicated involvements of plot, heightened suspense, and elaborate theatrical effects.

motivation. The playwright's providing the actions of his characters with adequate and proper cause, reason, or justification.

naturalism. An attempt to intensify realism by portraying events and characters as close to objective reality as possible. Naturalistic plays are based on the principle that cause and effect govern human conduct. The naturalist avoids all moral and ethical pronouncements.

pace. The speed at which the action of a play moves.

pathos. The emotional quality in a situation which evokes sympathy and compassion from an audience.

plot, subplot. The ordered arrangement of actions and characters which develops the story of the play. The subplot is a secondary story often involving a group of minor characters but related to the action of the main plot.

prop, properties. Movable objects or furniture used in the action. Large pieces of furniture are considered part of the set.

protagonist. The leading character in a play.

realism. An attempt to represent on stage the generally observed facts of experience. Realism tends to be less deterministic than naturalism in working out characterization. A realistic dramatist often criticizes the pattern of life he is arranging, whereas a naturalistic dramatist tries to refrain from any personal interpretations.

sentimentality. An emotional response in a character greater than the circumstance calls for; in a play, the attempt to obtain an emotion, frequently a stock response, that is not adequately prepared for or justified by the character and situation.

soliloquy. A monologue delivered as though the speaker were talking to himself but is overheard by the audience.

stage left and *stage right.* Stage left is the actor's left and the audience's right; stage right is the actor's right, the audience's left. Unless specifically indicated, a dramatist means "stage left" when he indicates simply "left."

structure. The artistic arrangement or pattern of the episodes and details of action. Structure is not simply a matter of division

into acts and scenes, but is the dramatic organization of the conflicts, contrasts, and interrelations of plot and subplot which compose the organic unity of the play.

symbol. An image in which a material object stands for an abstract or generalized idea.

tag. The last line in a play.

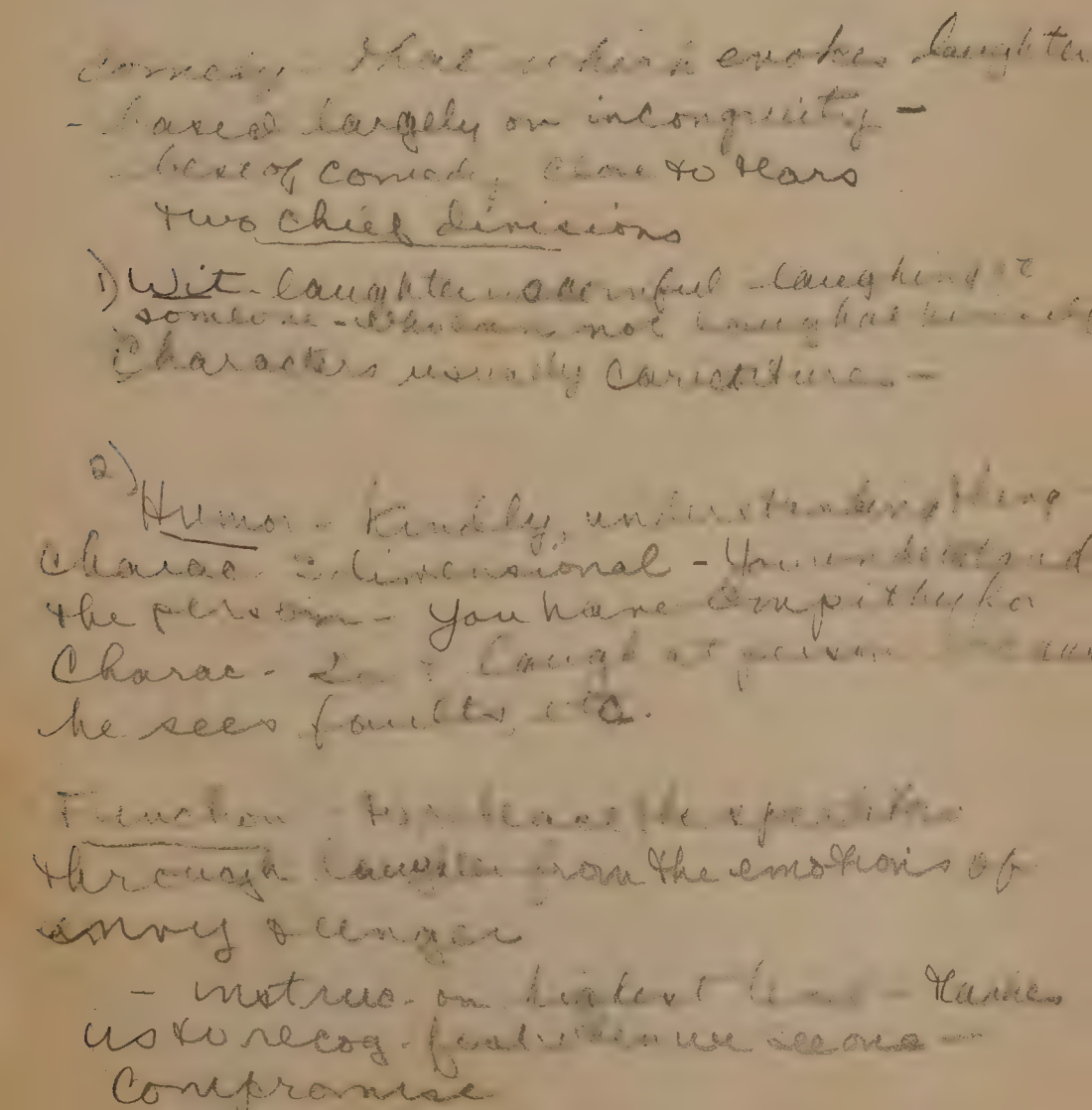
tempo. The timing or rate of speed of the action.

theatrical technique. Any device available to a dramatist to achieve the effect he desires on stage.

theme. The central idea developed by a play.

tone. The emotional qualities of the play as a whole or of any part of it. It consists of atmosphere or mood as well as the attitudes of the characters and the author.

upstage. The back of the stage.



Tragedy
Cleanses — emotions of pity & fear

tragic playwright
believes man cannot good - wants to be
can be better than he is
Situation malignant evil - destroy
everything in its path - We refuse to look
at situation recognize it.

Tragic protagonist must be endowed
with deep capacity for emotion - feel
more deeply - have capacity for spiritual
exaltation - profoundly moral - man
like ourselves - good & evil (more good) -
higher than average intelligence -
must understand why he suffers &
what contrib. he has made to the Evil

conforming Willing to give his
life for what he must Comes to
understanding of why he suffers -
he might not be moral hero -
all tragic protagonists - Lear
not that long - changes & dies -
his knowledge strength, his
true stage is understanding -
Why he dies or dead (in spirit
exaltation) - we are exalted
too - We do not have pity -
Can't understand or feel suffering
of many evil great evil in
good. At end we are happy - in
a general happiness sense. We
can't pity him because he's

type of comedy - which
give greater insight into life -
gotten what he wanted - other characters
do not have evil anymore
playwright takes view - you get
what's coming to you in this life - good
or evil -
PROTAGONIST
He must face evil alone without
any help -

Skin of our teeth
prototype
Mr. Antrobus - male of human race
Mrs - wife & mother of " "
Sabina - 2nd woman in triangle -
Henry - Evil that man produces in life
perpetual antag. between him & father
Gladys -
Fantasy -

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